

WEATHER: Whatever happened to winter?

**TOY STORY:** Gifts for all ages

CANADA'S

WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE

# Maclean's

DECEMBER 14, 1998

## OF RAPE AND JUSTICE

Has anything  
really changed in  
the Canadian  
military?

Pte. Tracey Constable  
and others tell  
their stories

By Jane O'Hara

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The Complete Inside™

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## COVER

### 16 Of rape and justice

The military has called for sexual assault victims to come forward, and women such as Tracy Constable have responded to that call. But as their cases are assessed, many are frustrated over the slow pace of the investigations—and wondering just how much has really changed in the Canadian Forces.



## Features

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Escom and Intel announce merger plans, forming the world's biggest company and reuniting the two biggest pieces of the old Standard Oil Trust.



### 24 Victory for all

Lucien Bouchard won a majority, but the ambiguous results had something for everyone.

### 68 Where's winter?

The warmest year on record has also seen more than its share of devastating storms and drought. Forecast for the coming months: continuing war.



### SPECIAL REPORT 62 Toy story

Furby may be this season's hottest toy, but it's hard to find the barbling \$40 ball of fur in stores: private sellers are asking up to \$500. Maclean's offers a guide to gifts for all ages.



# From The Editor

## Building for the future



**W**here? It was a close call. Because of these silent federalists, opinion polls overestimated the Parti Québécois vote. Paradoxically, the Parti Québécois lost the 1995 referendum. Quebec Liberal Leader Jean Charest's dilemma: Everyone was sure that the separatists were again at the gates in Quebec. But the separatists fell short of their goal of a landslide. Premier Lucien Bouchard now is in no position to launch into yet another referendum. Quebecers, as if consuming rubber that was going, told him to get back to governing the province, while they assess Charest in opposition.

With the referendum decision as held for now, thoughts turn to what the next few years may bring for Canada, and for Quebec. For starters, there will be much talk about something this sounds like a new private club—the social union. In fact, the fancy phrase is code for yet another attempt by the backroom boys to redress the balance of powers in social policy matters. The like may fly, given that the strings are being held by all 30 provinces. But social union also has the potential to erode and folk that it is nothing more than an exercise in giving up the ship and pondering to Quebec. And if that happens, we all know who is going to blame about yet another humbly for his province.

The federal government of Jean Charest has every reason to be careful on social union. If it is going to work, it will have to be seen as an instrument that benefits all provinces by allowing them more freedom to establish their own priorities. With agreed-to federal standards, that development could be a good and useful thing for Canada in the next century. But if it results in a patchwork of local health-care schemes and restrictions on Canadian ability to move from province to province, it will not win support from the populace. And Bouchard will once again insist

that Canada does not work for Quebec. Charest's vow to stay in is encouraging. He is the most unambiguous federalist leader the province has had in two generations. And now he also will have due to build a base and disabuse his critical the notion that he is an outsider in Quebec. The bad news notes: Charest's country—Quebec's Eastern Townships, now known as 22nd. Actually, one of his biggest problems is one he can do very little about—the hostility directed at him by many members of the press gallery of the national assembly, who serve as de facto publicity men for the PQ.



Charest with wife Michelle Dumais. Time is on his side.

At 40, Charest has time on his side. He stands an excellent chance of being the next Quebec premier. As for Bouchard, he will be 60 later this month, nearing pension age when he will next have to face the electors. How much longer will the fires burn? Charest eventually may be able to convince his constituents that the continued debates with separatism are hurting their Quebecers also need to understand that the constant threat of a referendum rings hollow in the rest of Canada. The guest at the head has turned into an empty shell game. The rest of Canada is really not very interested in such threats. The only way to moving on, building for the future Quebec should just as

Robert Lewis

## Newsroom Notes:

### Investigating the military

This week's is the fifth Maclean's cover story this year on problems in the Canadian Forces. "Fighting mad"—the April 13 cover—revealed how low pay, squalid living conditions and obsolete equipment—are sapping the Forces' morale. That produced an unprecedented flood of calls, letters and e-mails to the magazine and to Senior Writer Jane O'Hara, who has led our military coverage all year. Many of these readers—mostly present or former servicemen—told O'Hara that, worse as the money woes are, there is a much greater problem: widespread sexual abuse of women in the military and the covering of these incidents by the military police and brass. A woman in New Brunswick told O'Hara of being raped during basic training. "She knew another woman," O'Hara says. "That woman knew three other women and suddenly the numbers started growing." They grew into the hundreds. Every story had to be thoroughly investigated and confirmed. O'Hara drew on the assistance of other Maclean's staffers, including Senior Writers John Nicol and Sharon Doyle. Deadlier in Toronto, Brenda Barrowell in Montreal, Shari Bergman in Halifax and John Geddes in Ottawa, reporter/producer Shonda Dezel and Associate Editor Stephanie Niles.

Their work resulted in three covers on sexual abuse—"Rape in the military" (May 25), "Speaking out" (June 11) and "Abuse of power" (July 13). It also produced results in Ottawa: Defence Minister Art Eggleton declared he would seek an additional \$700 million to upgrade military pay and housing. The military announced it would investigate the claims of 31 servicewomen whose cases were obtained by Maclean's. It set up a 1-800 line for sexual assault complaints and Gen. Maurice Baril, chief of defence staff, personally urged women to come forward with their complaints. It appointed a ombudsman and created an advisory panel on gender integration. But as O'Hara's cover story—"Of rape and justice"—this week (page 116) makes clear, the military, while it has made progress, still has a long way to go before its women members can feel they are accepted, valued and protected, as equal partners in the Canadian Forces.

# Night Club



THE WORLD'S  
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HERE IS A CHECKLIST WHICH  
MAY HELP IN DECIDING WHICH VEHICLE IS RIGHT FOR YOU.

AT THE DEALERSHIP:

Exterior you will choose OK?	1	2	3	4	5
Interior you like OK?	1	2	3	4	5
Trunk space sufficient?	1	2	3	4	5
Space easy to get at?	1	2	3	4	5
Easy access to front and rear seats?	1	2	3	4	5
Seats comfortable?	1	2	3	4	5
Easy to adjust?	1	2	3	4	5
Sufficient head room?	1	2	3	4	5
Knee fit well easy to adjust?	1	2	3	4	5
Passenger space in car/cargo glove box, etc.?	1	2	3	4	5
Rear and side mirrors adjust easily?	1	2	3	4	5
Good visibility from car?	1	2	3	4	5
Right rear window visible in rear-view mirror?	1	2	3	4	5
Defroster controls easy to access?	1	2	3	4	5
Sound system satisfactory?	1	2	3	4	5
Interior lighting sufficient?	1	2	3	4	5

IN ALLEY OR ON QUIET STREET:

Steering fit and feels easy to control?	1	2	3	4	5
Steering responsive at low speeds?	1	2	3	4	5
Driving smooth?	1	2	3	4	5
Brakes function smoothly?	1	2	3	4	5
ABS	1	2	3	4	5

IN STOP-AND-GO TRAFFIC:

Accelerate on govt from full stop?	1	2	3	4	5
Small turning circle on L turn?	1	2	3	4	5
Left turn?	1	2	3	4	5
Easy to parallel park?	1	2	3	4	5
Easy to park at curb?	1	2	3	4	5

ON THE FREEWAY:

Accelerate on govt at entrance?	1	2	3	4	5
Accelerate good when passing?	1	2	3	4	5
Oversteer or understeer on curve?	1	2	3	4	5
Driving smooth at higher speeds?	1	2	3	4	5
Noise level OK?	1	2	3	4	5
Windows, sunroof, top easy to operate?	1	2	3	4	5

ON HILLS AND OFF ROAD:

Acceleration good on hills?	1	2	3	4	5
Parking brake secure uphill?	1	2	3	4	5
Exhaust if	1	2	3	4	5
Ride smooth over bumps, potholes, ruts?	1	2	3	4	5

AFTER DARK:

Visibility good with headlights?	1	2	3	4	5
Brakes?	1	2	3	4	5
Visibility good looking up?	1	2	3	4	5

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# AUTOMOTIVE INSTITUTE

One of Canada's Best-Kept Secrets



**T**he Canadian Automotive Institute, located on the campus of Barrie, Ontario's Georgian College of Applied Arts and Technology, is one of Canada's best-kept secrets.

"The Institute, which attracts 450 students from across Canada for its three-year co-operative diploma in Business Administration Automotive Marketing, is having a difficult time in just keeping up with demand for its graduates by the industry," says Sandra Gee, Director of Alumni Relations.

"Our major challenge now is to increase our enrollment to help meet the ever-growing requirement for our graduates by automobile dealerships, automotive head offices, parts and service market, leasing and financing sectors."

The program, offered in both English and French, started in 1985 with \$5.5 million of seed money from Canada's automobile dealers who were in need of attracting higher quality people to the industry. While the Institute is now funded by the province of

Ontario, it continues to receive substantial financial and technical support from every sector of the industry—including about \$130,000 in annual scholarships, Gee adds.

## INDUSTRY BENEFITS

For Bill Atkinson, General Manager of the Applewood Chevrolet Oldsmobile Cadillac dealership in Mississauga, and immediate past chairman of the Institute, "the program has met all of our industry's expectations in the type of people it graduates."

Atkinson, who is also a member of the Toronto Automobile Dealers Association, says the program is not only filling a void in providing future managers, its graduates enhance the industry's image.

"Every year the quality of graduates gets better. Initially, the program attracted the sons and daughters of dealers and others closely related to the business. This is no longer the case, and at least half of the students have no family connection to the industry—just a keen interest in it."



Bill Atkinson,  
Past Chairman of Canadian  
Automotive Institute

"Most importantly for the automotive industry, these graduates are very sensitive to the needs and concerns of today's consumers. There is no question that they are better prepared than their predecessors and have raised the level of excellence in every sector of the industry."

## STRONG FUNDAMENTALS

The Institute's program, which features strong academic courses under the leadership of Marie Noel Bonicolaro, also includes three paid semesters of employment for students in various sectors of the Canadian automotive industry. Graduates frequently end up working with firms where they took their co-operative hands-on training.

Some students have even taken their co-operative training in New Zealand or Sweden, Gee adds.

"There is also a growing number of women attracted to the program in response to expanding job opportunities in the field. This year about 10 per cent of the students are women, compared to only about one or two per cent when the Institute was first founded."

The program, which is also offered in French, attracts about 100 students from Quebec.

"While many of them don't speak English when they first

arrive, by the end of the first semester they quickly settle into campus life, and have a better grasp of the English language," says Payline Clénier, a co-operative education consultant with the Institute. "By the time they graduate, not only do they have a good working knowledge of English, but because of their bilingual capabilities, they are in very high demand by the industry."

"In fact, a number of our English-speaking students are interested in developing greater skills in French because of the numerous opportunities for bilingual managers."

In addition to the actual course work at the college, the Institute can also boast of hosting North America's largest annual outdoor auto show, which attracts as many

as 22,000 people.

## TEAMWORK

The auto show helps develop teamwork skills, says Jennifer Denison, a second-year student from Barrie, who hopes to move into a marketing position with one of the major manufacturers.

Jennifer plans to complete a bachelor's degree and possibly a masters degree at Northwood University, a Midland, Mich.-based university which is affiliated with the Canadian Automotive Institute and offers a degree in business with a specialty in automotive marketing and other areas. Northwood gives the Institute's graduates three years' credit towards its four-year degree program. A few also take their degrees at the University of Windsor, which has a similar work-

ing arrangement with the Institute. At least a third of the graduates take a degree program from Northwood.

Christopher Rodriguez, a second-year student from Windsor, who also attended the University of Manitoba, says he is excited about his career future. "In this industry, it appears jobs are looking for people."

Christopher, who also means to attend Northwood to achieve a bachelor's and possibly a masters business degree, had high praise for the co-operative aspects of the program. "It has helped me develop various personal and analytical skills."

As for as Bill Atkinson is concerned, the Barrie College has already paid handsome dividends for his firm. Three of his managers are graduates of the program.

## Volvo introduces nimble S70 All-Wheel Drive sedan

**F**or 1999, the capable Volvo All-Wheel Drive system makes its first appearance in a sedan. Equipped with an eight 190-horsepower, turbocharged 20-valve engine that complements its aggressive stance, this S70 puts its power on the ground in a most convincing way.

Volvo's intelligent AWD system continuously keeps tabs on the car's dynamic state—the ever-changing combination of acceleration, braking, cornering and traction available at each wheel. And it adjusts the distribution of power among the wheels according to what it senses. If a wheel is about to dip, the system feeds less power to that wheel and more to the wheels with better traction. The car literally detects the conditions it has to work with at any moment and makes the best possible use of them.

The experience is one of confident connection to the road. That is particularly apparent to Canadian drivers when road conditions run the gamut from slick to sleet to snow to ice... sometimes all in a matter of minutes!

The new S70 AWD takes its place in the burgeoning Volvo AWD lineup alongside the spirited and spacious V70 AWD sportswagon, the formidable 247-horsepower V70 R AWD, and the go-most-anywhere V70 AWD Cross Country. And the AWDs are only one branch of a rapidly growing Volvo family tree.

Volvo models range from the fully equipped front-wheel drive S70 and V70 models, through the various AWDs and the beautiful C70 Coupe and Convertible, to the new and technologically advanced S80 sedan. Volvo is boldly following a corporate commitment to developing a more varied product line featuring increased choices for a wider range of customers, to look for additional exciting Volvo models.





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# THE MAIL

placement therapy in the world to the black-buck HIV/AIDS Institute STC, to the recent launch of a new treatment for autism. Canadian doctors have shown that Canada's medical researchers have earned their outstanding international reputation through decades of achievement. Canada's future in medical research can only be assured by a major increase in investment to research facilities by Canada's government agencies and through solid partnerships with the private sector. It is unfortunate that Maclean's uses the dimensions of Oliver's dispute to cast doubt on all the relationships among hospital researchers, research institutions and those whose investments keep medical research going in Canada.

*Merrey J. Rhee,  
President, Pharmaceutical Manufacturers  
Association of Canada,  
Ottawa*

Dr. Jack Newman does not have his facts correct when he implies that the Hospital for Sick Children receives large sums of money from formula companies in return for promotion of their products ("Praiseworthy conduct," The Mail, Dec. 7). The hospital does not have and will not in the future have an exclusive contract with any formula supplier, nor has it received funds from other companies for the use of specific formulas. This arrangement allows a choice of formula options if medically indicated or if the promotion of breast milk is not possible. The hospital agrees with Newman that breast milk is the preferred nutrient for infants. Sick Kids has an exemplary breastfeeding clinic, led by skilled nurses who are certified lactation consultants, supported by knowledgeable pediatricians who are devoted to breastfeeding and its benefits. Mothers are encouraged and assisted in maintaining breastfeeding during their child's hospitalization. Last year of the leadership Sick Kids has taken in support of breastfeeding.

*Dr. Robert M. A. Madsen,  
Executive pediatrician in chief,  
Hospital for Sick Children,  
Toronto*

# Maclean's

CANADA'S WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE

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# The Road Ahead

## User fees could support health care

Canada is one of the few countries in the western world that effectively outlines any payments from individuals for medical care. It says it does not want what it calls a "two-tier" system, whereby those who can afford it can have medical care that would not otherwise be available. But let's face it, we do in some ways have exactly that in the form of services that are not covered by our provincial medicare plans: eyeglasses, prescription drugs, and private or semi-private rooms in hospitals, among others. While Ontario's health insurance program, OHIP, for instance, does cover examinations for eye-sight and hearing, the glasses and hearing aids required to remedy a problem are not covered. Other examples include dental work—provincial plans generally cover only a few procedures.

What do people do if they have no supplementary insurance plan (often provided through employment or pension) to cover those services? They scavenge a sample, they pay for them directly, or go without. But that contradicts one of the basic principles of the Canada Health Act, the federal law which, in effect, prohibits payment by individuals for medical services. That legis-

lation declares that for every citizen, rich or poor, medical services are to be accessible. Since we do, in fact, already have some elements of a two-tier system, could we not extend the idea just a smidgeon by suggesting that everyone contribute a small amount to help defray the costs of the health-care system? In these times of restraint, when governments are trying to eliminate their deficits and reduce their debts, it seems reasonable to ask each individual receiving medical care to pay a small contribution. Say \$5 to \$10 for a visit to the doctor, the same for a battery of blood tests, perhaps \$10 a night for a hospital stay.

It is worth that the very government that has cut back the most in funding health care—Ontario—is the one which at the same time prohibits the provinces, the level of government responsible for delivery of health care, from raising additional funds to offset its costs. If the federal government could be persuaded to amend the Canada Health Act to allow for modest contributions from those able to pay, surely that could be one solution—among others—to the challenge of reducing health-care costs.

*The Road Ahead column appears in relevant specific sections in Canada's political, social and economic problems. Unpublished columns may also appear in regular letters to appear in our exclusive letters board.*

**Michael Valentine,  
Ottawa**

## Honorable nominees

My nomination for the Honor Roll is Joe Moushara, a teacher at Maple Grove Education Centre in Helton, N.S., who has volunteered many hours to the local Memorial Club. There, junior-high-school students are taught about the high price our veterans paid for Canada. My heart swells with pride when they march, flags flying high. In our

small corner of Nova Scotia, Joe Moushara makes a difference and if every community had someone like Joe, Canada would be much more unified.

*Joe Moushara,  
Helton, N.S.*

I would like to nominate Maureen Kravitz, education director of the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre. I believe she exemplifies

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How can something be both  
greater than and less than?



The new Compaq Armada 7400 notebook has greater power and less weight. With the latest Intel® Pentium® II processor, up to 128 MB of RAM, CD-ROM capabilities, and superior graphics, the Armada 7400 offers desktop equivalence in a thin and light portable. And as a thin and light, high performance notebook with magnesium alloy casing, durability is never an issue. Less than six pounds of super-sleek, super-powerful notebook: the Armada 7400 truly **COMPAQ** has no equal. For more answers, better answers, reach us at [www.compaq.ca](http://www.compaq.ca) or call us at 1-800-567-1616.

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## THE MAIL

As so many ways begin when we seek to be as Canadians and the usage we seek to be as Canadians has almost. Kruiser is committed to public education as an instrument of peace. As an outstanding advocate of social justice for all, she works with thousands of children, scholars, politicians and members of the general public, to promote goodwill among different beliefs, cultures and generations.

John Bessie,  
Editor-in-Chief, University of Ottawa Press,  
Ottawa

We welcome Dr. Nancy Olivieri for her willingness to warn her patients and colleagues about the hazards of the drug desipramine. She demonstrates integrity and moral courage. We applaud Olivieri for putting patients before profit.

Chenier and Lee Morgan and Sarah Poth, Toronto

## 'Quebec countdown'

I was irritated by the line "A Beaudry victory would trigger a new countdown for Canada," as you cover "The political game" (Nov. 30). What an interesting editorial

and sent I would have said: "A Beaudry victory would trigger a new countdown for Quebec." Now (as the Parti Québécois has won the election, I hope that you will referendums to separate from Canada. As an anglophone who grew up in Quebec, I don't hate separation, but for first and I've reached the point, after 40 years of "separatism" of the Quebec problem, whom I'd be relieved to see the province go. We have enough other concerns with trying to make this country work, without the endless expenditure of energy contemplating the Quebec novel, while she gyrates her political hips.

Terry McIntyre,  
Windsor

## Lie detector

As someone who has spent more than half her life teaching English to native and non-native speakers of the language, I have done my fair share of presenting oral quizzed "rules." Year after year, I change the syllabus in my course as the Use and Abuse of English in recent changing usage. Yes, people do say "I feel badly" in even some-thing different from "I feel bad." And, you more and more speakers say "different

than" instead of "different from." New thanks to Maclean's most recent cover on basic manners ("How they know it," Dec. 7), I can go into my next class to announce that Canada's national magazine authorities all of us—incorrectly, of course—to substitute "to" for "for" whenever we wish, thereby justifying such formerly thrice-d-upon can structure as "I just laid around all day doing nothing" or "We spent the day lying down reading a magazine." Hopefully I can use this adverb automatically. Maclean's will put up more of a fight when it comes to deciding whether to put the apostrophe in "its" in the headline "Maclean's admits its editors were wrong" on that one. Sorry, that should read "lying down on the job."

John Jacobson,  
Kennesaw College, University of Western,  
Kennesaw, Ga.

## Correcting the record

With reference to your recent article "Of English and the word 'Quebec,'" Nov. 20, please be advised I did not release Lisa Thompson, the mother charged with attempting to kill her disabled daughter. In fact, I was away on vacation at the time.

Melody Kaskin  
Local administrator, parent of Lisa Thompson,  
St. Catharines, Ont.

## Editorial Update

### Maclean's/The National Year-end Poll

In the Dec. 20/21 Jan. 4/5 double issue, Maclean's will publish the results of its 12th Annual Year-end Poll, a comprehensive and timely examination of the issues that matter most to Canadians. The poll—conducted on behalf of Maclean's and, CIBC, Solicitors/The National/The Strategic Counsel, one of Canada's foremost authorities on public opinion and statistics—examines the country's mood on a broad spectrum of topics it explores Canada's views on critical issues such as identity and living under both government spending (should Ottawa pay down the national debt or just money back into health care and social programs) and expectations about the new millennium. Plus CIBC Television will feature further analysis of Maclean's poll results on The National on Dec. 21 and 22.

John Jacobson,  
Kennesaw College, University of Western,  
Kennesaw, Ga.

### The Maclean's Guide to Personal Finance 1999

Just in time for holiday gift-giving and before FRUIT season hits, Maclean's has published its Premier Guide to Personal Finance 1999: a new book filled packed with useful information and expert advice. Edited by Ross Lowe, one of the country's foremost business experts, the Guide to Personal Finance provides timely, reliable information on topics ranging from mutual funds to education savings plans, from finding the best mortgage to retirement and estate planning. Get the most from your hard-earned dollars with the Maclean's Guide to Personal Finance 1999: on sale for \$6.95 at bookstores and newsstands everywhere.

## Newsstand Notes



### Web Site News

Visitors to the World Wide Web want to get a variety of stories from the current while it's hot. Our website is <http://www.macleans.ca>

Our Internet website also offers:

- **Maclean's World Solutions** – Informative and entertaining Web sites lead to the world's top stories, selected by Yahoo! Canada and Maclean's.
- **Maclean's Kitchen** – A selection of personal stories designed to help readers follow current news.
- **University Rankings** – Get annual look at university. Just a click away with links to university Web sites.
- **Maclean's Forum** – A place to speak out on issues of the day.

## Maclean's TV

on CTV  
Sundays 11:30 a.m.

Hosted by Pamela Milne, this weekly half-hour show provides a visual look at the people and news from the pages of Maclean's. Maclean's TV is a television worth watching. Watch Maclean's TV on CTV every Sunday morning at 11:30 a.m. before take Duffy's Sunday Report.

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Column



## Barbara Amiel

### My critics live on a different planet

**D**ear Diary: What a joy to receive yet another letter from Warren Amiel, former solicitor general of Canada and now the president of KCHRDD, as it casually styles itself. No, not a bird, not an illness, but the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development in Montreal. These little letters-look from Mr. Amiel are warped but useful: a road map into how the discredited left manages to hang onto its delusions.

Like most Amiel's letter writers, sadly, Mr. Amiel was hostile to my columns urging an end to attempts to bring Gen. Augusto Pinochet to trial in Spain. I suggested that you simply can't treat sociopolitical crimes the same way you treat an ordinary murder in Calgary or a robbery in Etobicoke. Jurisdiction is not an empty concept; it means trial in a court that has a sense of time and place. Chile is the place for the trial of Pinochet and if the Chileans decide they wish to have the insanity Pinochet wrote in exchange for relinquishing power, well, that seems to me a matter for the Chileans.

Look, Warren, I know you're a bit of a writer's masochist, but you can't just rewrite history. It was the Chilean Assembly that first approved an indictment of your apostate slavener Amiel, and then approved the 1973 coup by Pinochet with the backing of the left-identical Christian Democrats and Social Democrats. By then, Amiel had 15,000 Chilean troops, central intelligence in place. The chamber of deputies had declared the authoritarianism deserves pouring out of the president's office. Unconstitutionally and outside the law, as had the Chilean Supreme Court and complicit general. Parliament denounced the inclusion of military officers in the Amiel government, to act as a brake on any coup staged by Amiel. The free press in Chile had vanished. Former president Eduardo Frei, a democrat to the core, welcomed the military coup as "having saved Chile and all of us whose lives are certainly not as important as Chile's, but they are human lives." He added, "A end war was being well prepared by the Marais. And that is what the world does not know, refuse to know." Over to you, Warren.

More than 3,000 people went missing under Pinochet. Half of them disappeared at the first 18 months when Chile was virtually a civil war. The remainder disappeared during the next 35 years. One is too many and 3,000 is hardly, but it doesn't add up to a bit of human compassion with Fidel Castro's regime. In my last column, I wrote that "the unique pursuit of peace and justice has gotta be the surest way to stifle and bloodshed." Amiel replied that "history has taught us the contrary, that such a pursuit has led to the abolition of slavery, the establishment of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the recent approval of

the international criminal court, all of which have contributed to will contribute to a more just, peaceful and ordered society." Warren, are we on the same planet?

It is true that slavery was abolished in America after a civil war that killed more than 600,000 people in the middle of the 19th century, not through any utopian pursuit of justice but rather through heated and traditional notions that had their roots in all sorts of ideas including Christianity. Slavery was then instituted in the 20th century by industrial ideologues, all determined to create a perfect world. Twenty million died in the former Soviet Union, estimates of the Chinese victims to date range between 45 million to 79 million, between 4.5 and 5.5 million in Communist Cambodia, Vietnam and North Korea combined, and one million in Eastern Europe. And this does not include the victims of Nazism.

Until recently, the civilized world understood that it was best to refrain from applying ordinary criminal law to acts that occurred in a different era and place. But this attitude, we now know, was wrong. We left powerless in the face of evil men like Stokholm Milosevic, strutting around covered with blood, instead of handing him down and shooting him—pure retribution that would at least not hurt and bend the law by a sliver. It was a mistake to give a new opinion was considered, namely an international criminal court.

Some people embraced this act of misjudged but good instincts, none mindlessly because they couldn't see the consequences and some—largely among the old/new left like the KCHRDD—for other reasons. They wanted to prosecute them, they were alleged to have committed the big list of being the world's moral reformers. I can't wait to see what a Jew (ah, there) the former Nazis prosecutor

Richard Goldstone will do when the first Israeli is extradited from London charged by Palestinians with ethnic cleansing.

Your letter, Warren, says you would "fully support the prosecution of any tyrant from the left or right, who has committed serious crimes." The trouble is, Warren, and I said so, that tyrants are cheap. I haven't ever seen you or your KCHRDD co-directors go after tyrants of the left. One of your KCHRDD co-directors, Jose Carragosa, as Canada's minister of sport and culture, once argued that we should apply sanctions to South Africa but play hockey with the Soviet Union because that was in the "spirit of the banks."

In fact, KCHRDD is a bit of a topoi: there's more for old lefties, isn't it? Just reading your literature makes one nostalgic. It's all that Orwellian newspapers of the movement: still about "North-South and regional activism," "convergence" and "underground people's rights" and, of course, "women's rights." Warren, there are thousands in the jail, sinking prisons of Cuba and China while you worry about North-South networking. I guess old Pinochet takes your mind off these things.

Edited by  
TAMARA DAVIES

When Canadian journalist News Newman was appointed co-host of ABC's *Good Morning America* last May, he took the job, he said then, "with no illusions." Just as well: the New York City-based morning show, ranked second in the ratings, has lost more than 25 per cent of its viewers in the past two years, and apparently the network is laying some blame with Newman. Last week, several publicists—including *USA Today* and *Fortune*—speculated that the 39-year-old Toronto native is about to be replaced.

Since Newman's debut, critics have complained that the show's focus has become too soft, almost pandering, and that Newman and co-host Lisa McElroy lack chemistry. Changes to his appearance—contact lenses and a new wardrobe—did not appear to make a difference. Last February, NBC hired another Canadian—former *Canada AM* producer Flo-



#### Business: Advent of restructuring as college drops

Conway—as a senior producer for the show. But Conway reported that network officials, worried that the program may fall to low in the ratings, might make wholesale changes that include new producers. Last week, Conway said that she was “not aware of any restructuring” and ABC spokeswoman Glenn Murphy pointed down to “rumors.” But a source at the network told *Metromix* that the changes are likely to occur in January.

It's not all bad news. Newman—whose three-year contract will pay him an estimated \$1 million this year—and Cowi will likely be offered other jobs within ABC. If Newman does lose his high-profile position, there is a convincing precedent: fellow Canadian Peter Jennings lasted three years as ABC's news anchor in the 1960s before being removed. He returned in 1983 and has been host of *World News Tonight* with *Peter Jennings* for 15 years.

Quebec's Liberal MP Margaret Delisle knows the meaning of the word squeaker. In the 1994 provincial election, the 51-year-old eluded a victory in her central Judo-Tato riding by a mere 25 votes. In last week's election, the margin was even tighter, but she won the seat in a by-election because the coalition partners who became living temporarily outside the province were counted. Delisle led PQ candidate Daniel Mercier Guay by only 17 votes. When the 300-vote runoff ballots



knowledge of his comment, saying "We are heading into a bark with the canons." Is another gaffe. Delors referred to coal servants as "pencil pushers." A former mayor of suburban Sillery, which is part of the mining. Delors managed to survive her stumble. And on election night, with her victory finally secured, she looked and sounded jubilant. With good reason.

According to the Geonames Canada Geographical Names Database, the top 100 longest place names in the country:

- 3. Cope St. George-Petit Jardin-Grand Jardin-Be Gaze-Machies Petit Lorretto, Nfld
- 4. Coves d'eau du Carden des Ternos des Sixième et Septième Rang, Que.
- 5. Ruisseau Kitchikewapewikish Kitchikewapewikish, Que
- 6. Décharge des Neuvaine, Sixième et Dixième Concessions, Que.
- 7. Coves d'eau de la Concession Sud-Est de King Saint-Basile, Que.
- 8. Lower North Branch Little Southwest Mainville Fleuve, N.B.

When Canadians were asked if the threat of AIDS had affected their sex lives, the majority answered no. Only among those under 25 did a majority respond in the affirmative, with people 25 to 34 split down the middle. By percentage of 1,400 adults.

	Total	Under 25	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+
<b>YES</b>	35	68	60	33	26	13
<b>NO</b>	68	46	50	68	74	90

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AIR FRANCE

## Opening NOTES



Baumann now, and in 1996, ruled the pool at the L.A. Games

### DOUBLE TAKE

Alex  
Baumann

When swimmer Alex Baumann won the gold medal and shattered the world record in the 400m individual medley race at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games, it was a gloriousthree for Canadians. Despite an East Bloc boycott, the 30-year-old Sudbury, Ont., native was the golden boy of the games, winning three gold medals and one silver, and setting two world records. "I made me proud to be Canadian," he now recalls. Fourteen years later, Baumann is still involved with another sport—but for athletes Diana Ender. After retiring from competition in 1987, he married Tracy Tippet, an Australian name. They moved to her home town of Brisbane in 1991 and have two children, Ashton, 5, and Tabitha, 3. Now 34, Baumann's e-droider with the air partner of tourism, sport and racing in Queensland. He praises the Australian government's financial support of sport, adding "Canada needs that—it leads to better results." Baumann still sports the red maple leaf tattoo on his chest that he got to commemorate the 1984 Games, but he now has a hint of an Australian accent. "I try to keep my kids informed about Canada," he says. "But I'm well-entrenched here." It wasn't easy, though. Baumann admits he is only now getting used to the constant hot weather and the changes to his favorite holiday, fishing. "I love to fish, and being from Northern Ontario I was used to lakes," he says. "Here, it's all ocean fishing."

LEAH FISHER

### POP MOVIES

#### Another frontier

The usual Star Trek cliché: Two men are once again exploring the final frontier in Star Trek: Insurrection. The eighth movie in the Trek series focuses on a conflict between Capt. Jean Luc Picard (Patrick Stewart) and Lt. Cmdr. Data (Brent Spiner). The trouble starts when Picard discovers Data has not only been taken hostage, but he has to be destroyed?

1. <i>Alien's</i> (R) (1992) ... \$174,000	11. <i>Star Trek: The Motion Picture</i> (PG) ... \$10,000
2. <i>Star Trek: The Motion Picture</i> (PG) ... \$10,000	12. <i>Star Trek: The Motion Picture</i> (PG) ... \$10,000
3. <i>Star Trek: The Motion Picture</i> (PG) ... \$10,000	13. <i>Star Trek: The Motion Picture</i> (PG) ... \$10,000
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6. <i>Star Trek: The Motion Picture</i> (PG) ... \$10,000	16. <i>Star Trek: The Motion Picture</i> (PG) ... \$10,000
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9. <i>Star Trek: The Motion Picture</i> (PG) ... \$10,000	19. <i>Star Trek: The Motion Picture</i> (PG) ... \$10,000
10. <i>Star Trek: The Motion Picture</i> (PG) ... \$10,000	20. <i>Star Trek: The Motion Picture</i> (PG) ... \$10,000

### BEST-SELLERS

#### FICTION

1. *The Love of a Good Woman*, Alice Walker (1)
2. *Home from the West*, Gary Shteyn (1)
3. *When in Rome*, Tim Wirth (1)
4. *The Bookman*, Michael Chabon (1)
5. *Amsterdam*, Joe McEwan (1)
6. *King of the Hill*, Stephen King (1)
7. *A Simple Plan*, Carl Hiaasen (1)
8. *The White House*, Barbara Ehrenreich (1)
9. *The Culture of Imperialism*, Edward Said (1)
10. *The Hunger Games*, Suzanne Collins (1)

#### NONFICTION

1. *When*, Peter C. Newman (1)
2. *The Bookman*, Michael Chabon (1)
3. *The Professor and the Moon*, James Macmillan (1)
4. *The Bookman*, Michael Chabon (1)
5. *When in Rome*, Tim Wirth (1)
6. *The Bookman*, Michael Chabon (1)
7. *The Bookman*, Michael Chabon (1)
8. *The Bookman*, Michael Chabon (1)
9. *The Bookman*, Michael Chabon (1)
10. *The Bookman*, Michael Chabon (1)

### A house divided by divorce

Expanding on her 1996 Toronto Life article about an eccentric landlord, Wendy Dennis's *The Choice from Hell* (Macfarlane Walter & Ross) chronicles the split and custody battle between Jim Gordon and Terry Nuyt. The book is the personal angle—Dennis and Gordon have been living together through the trial.

### THE DIVORCE FROM HELL



## Passages

**APPOINTED:** Former prime minister Brian Mulroney, 59, as chairman of Forbes Global Business and Finance magazine, by Forbes chief executive Steve Forbes, in New York City. The weekly publication is the English-language international edition of Forbes magazine. Mulroney will continue to live in Montreal and commute to New York as he works to develop the magazine worldwide.



**DIED:** Judge Robert Sauvé, 67, of cancer, in Montreal. He is considered the father of the Worker Health and Safety Board and of legal aid in Quebec.

**DIED:** Jazz bandleader Bob Huggart, 84, in Toronto. He, during his 60-year career, Huggart played with most of the jazz greats, including Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong and Charlie Parker.

**DIED:** British journalist and publicist author Quentin Crisp, 72, after a violent stroke with multiple sclerosis, in Gloucestershire, England.

**CONVICTED:** Silvio Riina, 43, founder of the Mafia-Basile Just for Laughs Festival, of sexual assault, in Montreal. Riina pleaded guilty to sexually assaulting a 19-year-old woman during a celebration marking the 15th anniversary of the festival last February.

**RETIRED:** Jean Park, 71, is editor of L'Amorale in Montreal. Park founded the French language magazine in 1977 with Lloyd Huggart and has been editor since. Park is being replaced by Gail Gaudin, 40, who has written for the publication since 1989.

**CREATED:** By Bill Gates, 43, billionaire president of Microsoft, and his wife, Melinda, 34, The Bill and Melinda Gates Children's Vaccine Program, in New York City. The couple are donating \$150 million to the program, whose goal is to reduce the time it takes for vaccines to reach children in developing nations.

**CHARGED:** British supermodel Naomi Campbell, 28, with assaulting her personal assistant, in Toronto. The alleged beating took place while Campbell was in the city filming a movie in September.

# OF RAPEAN JUSTICE

## Has anything really changed in the Canadian Forces?

BY JANE O'HARA

**T**ierry Constable was understandably skeptical when, last May, Constable's top soldier, chief of defence staff Gen Monroe Baril, called on women who had been sexually assaulted in the Canadian Forces to come forward and tell their stories. Constable, a native of Grand Falls, Nfld., was one of those women. Eleven years ago, she says, as a 22-year-old medical assistant in the air force, she was raped by a military doctor, a captain, on the seventh floor of the National Defence Medical Centre in Ottawa. She did not report the attack at the time, feeling she would not be believed by the military brass or by a woman that often looked askance over her shoulder. "Being a female and being a female," she says with a strong Newfoundland accent, "I knew no one would even listen to me." Instead, Constable left the Forces with her secret, alone, doing the career she loved.

For more than a decade, Constable says, she "rehearsed in my mind a thousand times" how to tell someone what had happened to her. But she kept silent—and last spring, when she picked up the May 25 issue of *Maclean's* and tried to read the heart-breaking stories of women who charged they had been sexually assaulted by military men, Constable stopped for word, contacting *Maclean's* with her story. It was published in the June 1 issue. And in spite of her skepticism, she also welcomed the opportunity to finally pursue her case within the military, especially after Baril, under pressure to act, issued his unprecedented invitation. Now, with her allegations in the hands of the Ottawa Crown attorney's office—the case no longer falls under military jurisdiction—Constable says she has few regrets. "I'm glad it's come this far," says Constable, who is still a reserve private and works on contract for the military as an administrative assistant.

She is one of the lucky ones. Of the more than 30 women who came forward to *Maclean's*

with their stories of sexual abuse in the Forces, almost all have been disappointed with its military's handling of their cases. Others who contacted the Forces, either through their office or the special 1-800 sexual-assault helpline established when the news reports appeared, also regretted regrets. In some instances, they say, laughing has marred the investigations, which Baril promised would be thorough and handled by the new National Investigation Service instead of the vilified military police. In others, the difficulties of reopening a case after many years have presented insurmountable obstacles. And, almost always, there is the heartbreak of reliving a traumatic episode in their lives. In all too many instances, it appears, the search for justice has proven almost as painful as the incident that prompted it.

**COVER**



When Baril, in the wake of the *Maclean's* reports, admitted the Forces had a problem integrating women into the ranks and declared that sexually abusive behaviour would not be tolerated, Constable jumped at the chance to talk to the chief of defence staff. "He said he wanted to hear from us, so I said, 'OK, he's going to hear from me,'" says Constable, who was also one of more than 75 people to call the 1-800 number as of the end of October. "He was pretty vague when I talked to him, almost like he was reading off a sheet of paper. But I was also proud of him for finally sticking up for us."

More important, her allegations against the doctor, who is one of the Forces and practicing medicine in Wisconsin, were actively pursued by the NIS. Now, after a five-month investigation, it is up to the Crown to decide if there is enough evidence to lay charges. "It's been hard waiting," Constable says. "I know I'd be scared if they lay charges—scared for my life. But I'll be happy too."

Leanne Ryan, 33, a Forces administrative clerk, says the military turned its back on her when she reported being sexually assaulted in Bosnia in 1994. Sent back to her home base, CFB Valcartier in



### MEMORIES OF REALITY:

After enduring a vicious beating 10 years ago, Neper turned her back on a military career

**TURNING HER CASE**  
For Constable, there is hope after more than a decade of silence

BY JANE O'HARA

Quebec, she sought the help of a military psychiatrist—who told her the incident was all in her head. When she gave her statement, in English, to the francophone military police, they later translated it into French—leaving out key elements and changing others so that it was unusable in pending charges. This year, she contacted Barish's office, and in late June her case was reopened by the NIS. Now, she is confident that the military will finally understand what she suffered. "I'm finally going to get someone to write down on paper that they screwed up," says Risse. "I'm feeling positive. I've got my fingers crossed. So many women have come forward, something has to happen."

Such optimism, though, is in short supply among other women who say they were the victims of sexual assault. Thérèse Baboo-Emond was a 19-year-old military cook when, she says, she was raped by a soldier in 1983 at CFB Borden, 90 km north of Toronto. She did not report the assault at the time, but last spring she contacted Mevluar with her story—and called the 1400 line. Initially she was hopeful about the NIS investigation, but now says "I've been brushed off. I wonder why I bothered telling the military my story." The investigation on her case has been changed twice, she says, and have kept her in the dark about their efforts. "The door never investigated [how they have]," says Baboo-Emond, who now lives in Cold Lake, Alta. "From August to October, I never heard from them."

Encouraged by being told in the dark, she says, she phoned the NIS to get the number for the office of Provost Marshal Patricia Sanson—in charge of military police and the NIS. Within half an hour of her call to Sanson's office, an NIS investigator



FROM THE TOP: Paul has called on women to come forward

PHOTO BY GUY LAWRENCE



PHOTO BY GUY LAWRENCE

## Some female soldiers say that, since spring, the situation within the military has improved

called. He explained for not getting back to her sooner, explaining that there were only 12 NIS investigators working on almost 200 cases. According to Baboo-Emond, he told her that "Your life is right on my desk and it's going to be a priority." But she was shocked when he also said how little had been done. "He said the investigators had gone to Borden," Baboo-Emond says in disbelief, "but couldn't find any files on me. They asked me if I had any pictures of myself in uniform." On Nov. 12, she was told her case would be handled by another NIS agent. He has yet to call.

Doree Theriault, who was an auxiliary waitress at the time she says she was raped at CFB Esquimaux in 1976, has also spoken to an NIS officer, but was wary during her videotaped interview. "He certainly talked like he was on my side about wanting to help me," she says, "but how much of that can you trust when you have been through what I have been through?" Theriault has taken matters into her own hands. She has launched a civil suit against the military and the two men who allegedly raped her. She and 21 other victims have also started the Canadian chapter of the American-based organization STAMF—Survivors Take Action Against Abuse by Military Personnel (in date: she has had 15 calls from both male and female victims).

Some have refused to talk to investigators. Among them is Dee Brasserie, one of Canada's first female fighter pilots, who was featured on the cover of the June 1 issue of *Maclean's*. Brasserie, who says she was subjected to rape, assault and harassment during a distinguished 21-year military career, believes that the much-watched new investigative branch is little more than the now-defunct and notorious Special Investigative Unit of the military police, under a new guise. Established in 1986 to handle security clearances, the SIU was disbanded in mid-1996 after an investigation revealed that most of its high-tech resources—and vast amounts of taxpayer money—were spent handling pilots and lockouts out of the military. "We need



ANXIETY AND MISTRUST: Brasserie is dubious about the investigators

FACING THE PAST: Baboo-Emond hoped for action, but is exasperated by the slow pace

to know them as the polymer police, because they always wear polymer suits," says Brasserie, who now lives in suburban Ontario, and will receive the Order of Canada at a ceremony at Government House in February. "The new NIS is just the same organization as the old SIU," Brasserie says. "They have the same purpose, principles, operation and organization. They're still military. I told them I was not going to be videotaped or photographed, that I didn't want the media seeing anything. I don't want them."

Growing numbers of others, though, are taking their chances. Since the *Maclean's* reports were published, the Forces have been swamped by complaints about sexual misconduct—both new and old. According to the military's own numbers, in the first 30 months of this year there have been 267 such complaints—

about as many as all other major complaints within the Forces, including the 111 assault, complaint. That is also nearly double the number filed for all of last year. "We set all the publicity and the 1400 number and the bills to report, we had an influx," acknowledges Capt. Adam Brassmeite, spokesman for the provost marshal's office. "Some of them are historical cases. That boosts our numbers."

Military officials say the high numbers show that the system is working and that women in the Forces now feel secure enough to bring complaints forward. "Maclean's brought us some light that had to be addressed," says Sanson, 52. "It's my responsibility to go with those complaints—and I did." Along with the establishment of the 1400 line, there have been other changes. In June, Defence Minister Ari Eggleton announced the appointment of André Martin, a former Montreal lawyer, as the military's first ombudsman, presiding an informal deanshouse for complaints (p. 20). And last month, Eggleton announced he was re-establishing an advisory board on sexual misconduct, headed by Sandra Phoenix, the former captain of the Royal 22nd Regiment who left the military in 1996 after being brutally harassed by fellow soldiers.

The mission remains. For Toronto's Rosemary Park, a former lieutenant-colonel who researched policy for the military before leaving the Forces in 1983, the advisory board will be just another cosmetic response in a military that needs full reconstructive surgery. "That board was supposed to be there from 1986 to 1996," she said. "They did away with it far three years and nobody noticed. It will have no power. It's just a classic off-to-the-periphery body that will do little." Still, some female soldiers believe that, since the spring, something has changed—for the better. "These women passed a lot of powder off," says Master Cpl. Steve Fortin, a supply technician at CFB Kingston in Ontario and a 20-year veteran of the Forces. "They're under a lot of people up." Fortin, who called the 1400 number in June with complaints about how her own sexual assault case was handled in 1996, says that anxiously has brought a new awareness. "Now," she notes, "if someone is going to tell a dirty joke, they ask you if you mind. This has helped a lot of women. Now, they are not scared to come forward. They know people can't put up with this too anymore."

That represents a sea-change in attitudes, compared with what Fortin encountered in 1983 when she was stationed at CFB Chilliwack in British Columbia. There, a sergeant would routinely come into her office, and in full view of her co-workers draw penises on her calendar. When he assaulted her—by pinning her to her desk, chocking her and putting his hand down her skirt—changes were had. Fortin's supervising officer subsequently got calls from a dozen other women with similar complaints. Although the sergeant was eventually court-martialed, the sexual-misconduct charges were stayed. He was convicted under Section 129 of the National Defence Act, a military code of conduct encompassing conduct preposterous to "good order and discipline"—the same charge that can be levied at soldiers for such minor offences as being late or chewing gum.

Fortin, meanwhile, says the worst part of the ordeal was the "three years of hell" she spent looking up in the mail during that time, she was forced to work alongside her attacker. "The military order is learn how to treat people who have gone through this," Fortin and last week, explaining her reasons for calling the 1400 number, "I wanted them to know this." Ultimately, it proved to be an exercise in futility. "I never got a call back from them," says Fortin. "Nothing."

Since July, the provost marshal's office has published monthly updates on the department of national defence Web site, listing the number of sexual assault complaints, investigations launched and charges laid. Officials have also kept a running tab on "the



sexual misconduct allegations" that Maclean's brought to light. According to news reports, the provincial marshal has already discussed with 30 of the criminal justice system. They had either been "thoroughly investigated the first time" and required no further action, or "the victims did not want to pursue the matter any further."

In fact, many of the women who have come forward feel they are nothing more than a number to the military. Despite Baril's promise that the military was ready to listen, some say their allegations have fallen on deaf ears. When one Ontario woman called the sexual-assault hotline in May and finally talked to an investigator a month later, she (and her son). The daughter of a sergeant, she says she was raped by a soldier on CFB Kingston in 1978, when she was 16. The woman, who asked that her name be withheld, says that in a separate incident her assault left a shrapnel to her head and threatened to shoot her.

Three years later, she joined the military as a medical assistant but left after three years because, she says, she could not tolerate the harassment she was subjected to. On one occasion, while her husband, a private in the military police, was in the hospital with a collapsed lung, her boss—a captain—tried to order her to go out with him. On another occasion, he pinned her against a wall because she told him she was sick and leaving work early. Later, she was harassed when her sergeant at the Royal Military College told her "You need to grow tits." But, more than anything else, the case continued to haunt her, finally compelling her to call the hotline.

The woman, who now 37 and studies health at Queen's University, says the military's initial allegations were "shockingly incompetent." When she gave her information to one NIS investigator, she clearly recalled many details, including her assailant's middle name, the type of car he drove and a description of the tattoo on his left forearm. She was appalled, however, at some of the seemingly absurd questions for one thing, the officer asked if she remembered her attacker's social insurance number. And there was also more than a hint of older, chauvinistic attitudes. At the conclusion of another interview, the investigator asked her: "Were you wearing anything provocative that day?"

In September, the NIS investigators found the woman's alleged assailant, who now out of the Forces and living in Victoria. When they phoned her and said they were investigating a 1978 sexual assault in Kingston, he allegedly blurted out: "Oh, that must have been —" she is the only one in Kingston. After that conversation, he retained a lawyer and has since refused to answer any questions about the charges. Still, the NIS turned the results of their investigation over to the Crown attorney's office in Kingston.

Last week, though, the Crown decided not to lay charges, saying there was no chance of a successful prosecution. "They said it was just a sexual-assault case," said the woman last week. The news left her devastated—"not saying she had never come forward with her complaint," "I am terrified," she says. "The last time I saw that guy he had a gun in my face. Now that they have contacted him and he knows I am alive here, I don't want to go out of the house. I am so mad because Gov. David was on television and saying he was going to let the wrongs and speak it better. You go through all this torment and torture and then they go back and you find you are your way."

This case underscores the fact that, while many of the women blame the military for failing to properly prosecute their assaults, the cases often a kinder in the civilian justice system. Incompatibility, Crown attorneys are loath to prosecute historical cases of sexual assault, which often prove costly, time-consuming and, because



INTO HER OWN HANDS: For Thompson, a civil suit seemed like the only course of action

evidence is hard to collect, difficult to pursue successfully. The provincial marshal's office has acknowledged the problems faced by military women in the civilian justice system. But problems exist in the military's own backyard. System admits that some historical cases may have been "just noise" so that her investigators could concentrate on newer complaints. "You still your priorities," said Simon. "I can assure you that cases that occurred in May or June or July of 1998, those got our attention immediately."

Krista Puhle, who now lives in Winnipeg, was hospitalized NIS could successfully prosecute the petty officer she says raped her while she was a communications researcher at Canadian Forces Station North, the northernmost military installation in Canada. After all, the incident happened only four years ago, and the officer is still



CHANGES: Critics wonder whether Eggleston's reforms carry weight

in the military at CFB Esplanade in Ottawa. Besides, she says, the military knew that another servicewoman on the same weekend day of day—but filed a similar complaint against the petty officer, and that a fellow serviceman had corroborated that woman's story.

That woman later dropped the charges, and Piche's complaint ground to a halt largely because of problems dealing where to try the case. Still, she believes there was enough evidence for the military to prosecute her allegations. But when she spoke to the NIS, she was told there would be no further action taken against the petty officer, who three years ago was dealt with administratively and given six months counseling and probation. "They tried to appease me by phoning me and saying they were looking into it," says Piche, "but other than that, I'm just one of their statistics. I'm out of the military now and they don't have to worry about it. I just don't know how to stick up to them and make it go anywhere after this."

Others, meanwhile, are turning to the military with complaints of outright brutality—with disappointing results. Joan Harper, who in 1989 was one of the first women to go through military training at the Forces, spoke to the NIS in May about her treatment at the



NEW PRIORITIES: Harper admits that other cases can be difficult to pursue

## Many women feel that authorities have bungled the investigations

Wainwright Training School in Alberta—and was told the three-year statute of limitations had run out on pursuing charges for such military offences as abuse of power. Although she was not sexually assaulted, Harper was kicked and beaten. In the point of being hospitalized, by four other women in her unit. She believes her sergeant's mistreatment at the time was responsible. When he came to see her in the hospital after the assault, he assured her it would be safe to return to the unit and nothing more would happen to her. "I asked him how he could be so sure I was safe and he told me, 'I can turn them on and I can turn them off,'" recalls Harper, who now lives in Toronto and still suffers permanent back pain because of the attack. "That when I returned to my unit there was a noise on my bed."

Harper's mother, Joan Sutherland, was outraged at the time of the assault—and was immediately flown from Toronto to Wainwright after she informed William McElduff, then Tory minister of defence, that she would go to the media if he did not arrange for her to see her daughter immediately. "A couple of weeks earlier, the CBC had done a big story on Joan and the other women and how wonderful it was for them to be in that first bar-

school," says Sutherland. "I asked the minister how he'd like to see Joan on TV again, with her face all black and blue, after her sergeant had ordered her to be beaten up." After a cursory investigation into the incident, one of the four women who had Harper up was fired. Sutherland left the Forces six weeks after the assault.

According to many who have been in the Forces, the abuse endured by Harper is a routine technique for forcing soldiers who don't quite measure up to shape up or drop out. In some cases, it is known as the "make as a blanket party" because a blanket is usually thrown over the head of the victim before they are attacked—ensuring that the attacker cannot be identified. Even before the assault on her, Harper had already had a taste of that brutality. In 1980, while training with her reserve unit, the Queen's Own Rifles, at a camp outside CFB Brandon, Harper woke up one morning to find a knife rammed had been been rammed down her throat. When the victim later said she had been raped, Harper was put in protective custody while the case was being investigated. In the end, the master corporal who had encouraged the attack was promoted with the chance of resigning or being given a dishonorable discharge. He resigned quietly and no further action was taken.

Theresa Bodnar, a reservist in Victoria from 1984 to 1996, recalls a fellow soldier who was attacked by a private who was supposed to be with him during a night attack on the ends of weeks. His officer: "His standards believed he was gay. 'It's just part of the code, the army's way of handling people who are homosexuals,'" says Bodnar, 38. "There's so much discrimination against them, they don't dare let us out when they're asked." Other soldiers come with her assessment.

"Guys are still perceived as an embarrassment," says Bodnar, who while with the Forces in 1986 and admits he took part in this punitive form of punishment. "There's an unbelievable hatred for them—you can't even measure it. But guys weren't the only ones who got blanket parties. Almost always they were ordered by the instructors. They'd come into a platoon and say, 'There's a f—'—up with the bringing this platoon down. You've got to sort your people out. And we'd sort them out."

To that end, Sutherland is angry that no charges were ever brought against the sergeant who ordered the attack on her daughter. But she thinks she is wasting her time trying to get justice from the Canadian Forces or the government. "Ten years have passed and it is still carrying the pain of this," says Sutherland. "But I have said that the government will do anything or even acknowledge her grievance. If they do anything, they'll strike a committee to study the problem and then make an ad hoc committee to study that committee. You can't fight them."

But there is hope. One woman who was assaulted a year ago while serving in Roman told McElduff's last week that charges were brought against her assailant, who was sentenced to eight months in military prison last week. According to the woman, who asked to remain anonymous, the military has done its part in trying to eradicate this problem, and the NIS is considerably effective with the reports that it does receive. "It said, the fact that such an atrocity and promiscuity still occur within the Forces, and change will not come until members of the military 'start respecting others and see their own behavior for what it is.'"

According to her, there is also another course of action. "I fear there are many other victims out there who have not spoken up yet," she said. "My one big wish is for these people to have the courage to do so—that is the only way to put an end to all this violence." It is a call to arms that some military women are heeding.

Web: SARAH DASSIS and JOHN NIGGS

# A SYMPATHETIC EAR

The grievances are certainly there—in his six months on the job, lawyer André Marin, the Canadian Forces' new ombudsman, has already experienced that firsthand. They have arrived in plain brown envelopes, slipped to him during his visits to bases by military personnel nervous of the potential repercussions of speaking out. They have come by phone to his ofice, reminders that Marin says, run the gamut from sexual harassment and performance appraisals to financial matters such as low pay. Along with that flood of unhappiness have been statements of support for his new office. Marin, who has made it a point to seek feedback from both military bases and the civilian life on what they would like to see from his operation, says he has been welcomd good luck so often he should be winning the lottery. But he has also faced several people who rolled their eyes during his consultations. "There is no doubt," says Marin, 33, "that people feel very cynical about me making any difference."

That is indeed the crucial question. And, in some respects, the prospects for the new ombudsman's office are dimming. According to a 1997 government briefing note, outlining the position, the ombudsman "has no formal authority, does not conduct formal investigations and makes no formal recommendations"—not even a paper tiger. And that has led critics to question the ombudsman's usefulness, and deny the fact that the government failed to follow the recommendations of the Somalia inquiry and establish an independent, accountable ombudsman—rather than an ombudsman who reports directly to Defence Minister Art Eggleston. "I fail to understand what his mandate is because there is no excitement to give him any kind of authority," says Reform defence critic Art Hargreaves. "I don't see how effective he is going to be."

Marin is intent on proving the critics wrong. Set up under the chain of command to help military personnel address grievances, his office is an add-on to the Forces' formal complaint system. His principal role, he says, will be to advise both military and civilian members of the Forces, and their dependants, on how best to resolve disputes, and intervene if necessary. But Marin also points out that the incentives for his operation, along with its budget, have not yet been finalized, and he plans to submit a report to Eggleston in a supplementary briefing what he will need to operate effectively. Marin says the emerging consensus from his visits to bases suggests military personnel want his office to be independent, subject to confidentiality and capable of offering a trustworthy review process. "Without the ability to independently collect our facts firsthand," he says, "it's going to be virtually impossible for us to have any type of credibility."

Eggleston certainly seems willing to give Marin the support he needs. The defence minister has promised "no restrictions" on what Marin can look into. Last week, he told Marin that the new ombudsman's office won't be "prosecuting position," and that Marin "will certainly have my full support as necessary to get the information that he needs to be able to help settle disputes. That's the only way



MAKING A DIFFERENCE: Critics say Marin (with Canadian Forces personnel) lacks clout

## Grievances flood in to the ombudsman

this position is going to work." Eggleston acknowledged that Marin lacks legislative investigative powers. But, the defence minister added, "he will not have any barrier in terms of what he needs to get to the bottom of a matter to be able to settle it."

Marin, a native of Montreal and the father of three children, acknowledges a high degree of anxiety lighter up on the chain of command over his new office. "Whether we'll be able to win the war over to our side or whether that will translate into an outcome down the line, we'll see," he says. In his previous position—he spent close to three years as head of the Ontario Special Investigations Unit, which probes accidents in which civilians are killed or injured by police—Marin developed a reputation for being independent and, to the frequent chagrin of government officials, open with the public and media. And that openness on the part of a man who will now be sifting through the

Forces' dirty laundry can only be reason for further nervousness among military brass already still shocked by scandal after scandal.

In his new role, Marin has already tried to embrace his autonomy by setting up shop in a grey stone commercial building in Ottawa's Byward Market instead of in defence department offices. But location isn't everything. Faced with an expected clientele, Marin and his staff of 30 people—right at the moment—have to start looking into cases after he files his report to Eggleston. "I hope telling my staff to take their vitamins now for January and February," he says. "I'm running this like a CEO who has been told to turn around the company." His new shareholders will watch his progress like hawks.

BRENDA BRANSWELL in Ottawa

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# VICTORY FOR ALL

BY BRENDA BRANSWELL

Francophone voters Yves Gélinaud and Stephen Amato chose opposing parties in Quebec's provincial election, but both reacted with relief last week in the aftermath of the Parti Québécois victory. Quebec Premier Lucien Bouchard's decision to put a sovereignty referendum on the ballot for one year as welcome news to both men. Amato, a Montreal transplant who voted Liberal and Gélinaud, a Shawinigan machanic who voted for the PQ. Like most Quebecers, neither wanted the PQ to launch another vote on independence. "I think people are more interested right now in their own wallets and making sure the economy stays afloat," said Amato, 33, who was angry over the PQ's budget cuts and voted Liberal to give the party a chance. As for Gélinaud? "I'm very happy," he said. Gélinaud, 46, voted PQ largely because he liked the Bouchard government and its track record at slaying the deficit. "The referendum is not a priority," he added. "And Bouchard sealed the message."

True—although it may not have been in his liking. For a victor, the premier was a thin smile that perhaps the most telling sign of his mood following the election was his victory speech. Normally a rousing orator, Bouchard delivered a flat, unadorned address to supporters at the PQ's empty overflowed campaign headquarters in Quebec City. It was barely the kind of win Bouchard wanted for his first elected mandate. His party captured a solid majority—75 seats to the Liberals 46—but to almost everyone's surprise their popular vote lagged slightly behind the Liberals' 42.7 per cent compared with 43.7 per cent. No doubt Bouchard also winced from the knowledge that former premier Jacques Parizeau, a frequent thorn in his side, posted a slightly better score for the PQ in the 1994 election. Parizeau had expected—and wanted—at least 67 per cent of the popular vote as a launching pad for another sovereignty vote. It was not to be, and as a setback Bouchard later acknowledged to reporters, his initial conclusion is that Quebecers simply want the PQ to govern. "They do what we are doing as a government," said the premier. "But they are not prepared to give us the conditions for a referendum right now."

Federalists reacted positively at the result, as did the money markets: the dollar rose and Canadian bond prices shot up. While politicians bawled queries about their skewed predictions—



Bouchard rejects both his hopes for a quick sovereignty referendum



Bouchard with wife Michèle vows to stay on as Liberal leader



## Lucien Bouchard wins a majority—but still suffers a setback

In the week before the election, almost all had predicted a landslide for the PQ. Bouchard shifted his attention, at least temporarily, away from a referendum to personally frictionless talks between Ottawa and the provinces over limiting federal spending power in social programs, the so-called social union. Meanwhile, he took problems on the home front, correct assumptions with Quebec's powerful public sector union should pick up steam now that the election is over. That, for a short while at least, all was calm. "The election time that everyone is happy," said Jean Lapierre, a popular Montreal radio show host. "Everyone called to say they were pleased."

For the provincial Liberals, the results could have been worse. One poll conducted a week before the election gave the PQ a 50-per-cent-point lead. Yet in the final days of the campaign, an anguished Liberal leader Jean Charest stepped up the attack, warning voters of the prospects of a referendum under a PQ government. That may have sent some voters back to the Liberals. As a result, Charest, who was a moral victory of sorts from the popular vote and kept his Sherbrooke seat by a slim 500 votes—voted to stay on as Liberal leader. But although he managed to deflect some criticism for what had been for the most part a lackluster 30-day campaign, there were the inevitable negative postmortems. David Price, a Conservative MP from the Eastern Townships who sat in Charest's caucus before the election: "They leader jumped to provincial politics in March, suggested Charest received an overdose of advice from too many different quarters. He didn't lose on his own," Price told a reporter. "That wasn't the normal Jean."

Liberals also offered up their own theories of what went wrong. "There is going to have to be a cleanup in the party's apparatus," contends veteran Liberal John Caccia, who recently stepped down after 20 years as an MNA. "They lost a communications battle in terms of selling their message across." But the election also highlighted the Liberals' persistent failure to attract adequate numbers of francophone voters (one pollster estimated that the PQ held a 15 per cent lead over the Liberals in francophone support at the ballot

box). "We're going to have to win over our francophone clientele if we hope to remain power one day," says Georges Fauriol, the party's former whip, who lost his Magdalen Islands seat to a PQ candidate. At the party's first caucus meeting in Quebec City last week, Charest suggested that the party needs to further clarify its constitutional policy—and other Liberals quickly weighed in. "We don't want to be the party that lost during the referendum," says Jacques Chagnon, caucus chairman. "What's our problem then? We have to find the means to show that it's otherwise."

The Liberals also need to win over more younger voters. A few promising young Liberal candidates became MNAs last week, such as Nathalie Normandeau, a 30-year-old former mayor from the Gaspé region. But the party didn't make its hoped-for gains with the 18-to-35-year-old age group. "I think we missed our chance," says Chagnon. And he points to the long-lived Action démocratique in Quebec, which picked up an average 12 per cent of the popular vote, as the likely beneficiary. "All of a sudden, the ADQ appeared as a more attractive alternative than us," Chagnon says.

The ADQ fielded candidates in all of Quebec's 125 ridings, but lost all but Quebecers' leader Mario Dumoulin in the party. Dubbed "Stupid Mario" by the media, he proved himself a lot to be reckoned with. A former Liberal, Dumoulin quit the party in 1994 after being ousted from his position as head of the party's youth wing for opposing the Charlottetown constitutional accord. He benefited most from the televised *Le Débat* on Nov. 17, leading Bouchard and Charest, Dumoulin had to settle for one week last week, his own *Radio-Canada* riding. But his party, which is considered a "hardcore" for disaffected Liberals and Progressives, played a spoiler role.

The PQ's second mandate promises some hurdles. More criticism was sent, spring because of the PQ's gesture to balance its books by 2000. Although the PQ has insisted it will achieve that goal, Finance Minister Bernard Landry acknowledged earlier this fall that the uncertain global economic situation will likely result in more severe spending cuts. "We may give the PQ their first headache. The unions talked their demand last summer for an 11.9 per cent increase over three years, which they will pursue in earnest now that the election is over."

Some observers remain convinced Bouchard will try to stage a referendum during his new mandate. Last week, the premier refused to say how long he was placing the idea on hold. But once the budget is balanced, Claude Rivest says, the party should start actively considering sovereignty. "I don't see the need for a public opinion survey. We have a lot of persuading and explaining to do," says Claude Lauchance, PQ MNA for Bellefleur, south of Quebec City. The uncertainty over the timing of a future referendum sits poorly with so-called *jeunes québécois* like Pierre de Bellefeuille. "Bouchard got the mandate he asked for," contends de Bellefeuille, a former PQ MNA on the *Longueuil* riding, who says he is "not as active as I like this implicitly." Although de Bellefeuille believes party members will be critical of Bouchard for putting the referendum on ice, he thinks the premier's decision will prevail. "Bouchard is an authoritarian guy," de Bellefeuille complains, "and the party has become docile."

In the short term, Bouchard is committed to the social union negotiations. He stressed the urgency of the bill, given the upcoming federal budget. "Quebecers saw this that Quebec was not spending properly (on provincial demands), and says the provinces won't compromise on its desire to opt out, with full compensation, of federal responsibilities (provincial jurisdiction). Some observers predict goals for federalists if Ottawa and the provinces strike a satisfactory deal. But opinion is divided over what ideal negotiations would mean. While some predict that sovereignty passions could be subdued, others disagree. "I don't see a protest on the streets over spending cuts," predicts Lapierre. "I don't see ever having a party where there is a hard argument over the social union." Critics not—but in Canadian politics, stranger things have happened. □





## Anthony Wilson-Smith

### Quebec fact or fiction?

**B**y now, their collective place among Canada's richest and most cautious voters should be well-established. Despite living in one of the country's largest provinces, they feel ignored and overlooked by Ottawa. As a result, they take seemingly contradictory steps to attend to their needs. They elect a premier who bushes the federal government but, in the end, is obliged to work with it. He represents an essentially social-democratic party, but tries to court big business. The opposition Liberals often criticize their federal counterparts—and their leader, despite the party's name, is a fiscal conservative. A major obstacle confronting the Liberals' hopes to gain power is the support they lose to a third, more right-wing party.

Ah, the clever electorate of British Columbia. Their only problem is that in media and political circles, they get no respect. Never mind that the province's voting behavior and political circumstances, as outlined above, are almost eerily similar to that of Quebec, that the latter's voters are regularly praised for their canny and sophisticated, while any story about B-C politics almost invariably carries the mocking—though true—remark that its voters are so eccentric they once elected a premier named *Ancur de Canisius*.

In politics, there is always a tug to preserve a cliché—and never more so than when it comes to Quebec. The notion that Quebecers' voting patterns are driven by a wish for checks and balances in dealing with Ottawa can at least be supported by circumstance. But the same is not true of much of the conventional wisdom accepted as fact during the election campaign. Among those ill-represented "truths" that, in the end, don't ring true:

**Jean Charest lost because his campaign was too right-wing.** Charest's Liberals, running on a program that included tax cuts and sharply reducing the size of government, drew the largest portion of the vote, won 43.7 per cent (while the PQ won 43.7 per cent). And the Liberal figure to live: 13.8 per cent that went to the *Action démocratique* du Québec—whose small government, free-enterprise policies are further to the right than the Liberal platform—and 25 per cent of the electorate vote, at least in part, for a downtown government. And Lucien Boivin's Parti Québécois, despite its social-democratic roots, shifted gears in mid-campaign to match Charest's promise of tax cuts, as opposed to increased government spending.

**Charest lost because of his province's not to hold a referendum.** Paradox suggested that Quebecers favor the possibility of a referendum as a weapon to win gains from the rest of the country

Charest's promise not to hold one was a cornerstone of his campaign—and ADQ Leader Mario Dumour said there should be a referendum on secession for a decade. A majority of Quebecers, then, voted for parties making such vows. And polls showed that a significant part of PQ support came from people who believe that Boivin will not hold a referendum during his new mandate.

**Sovereignist governments are the most successful at winning concessions from the rest of Canada.** Amazingly, the media and the Liberals showed this cannot from Boivin to survive unchallenged. Federalist governments have repeatedly extracted new powers from Ottawa—only to see those agreements collapse because of opposition from sovereignists. In 1983, Liberal Robert Bourassa agreed to the Victoria charter—which would have entrenched Quebec's veto over constitutional change—but backed out when he faced opposition at home.

In 1990, Boivin helped bring about the collapse of the Meech Lake accord when he backed from the federal government. But Meech, even if what Boivin called its "defiled" form, would have entrenched Quebec's right to name three judges to the Supreme Court, placed restrictions on federal spending power, formalized the province's share of control over immigration policy, and recognized Canada's linguistic duality. The failed Charest/Dumour accord of 1995 would have brought similar concessions. Both were opposed by sovereignists, because a constitutional agreement would have bound Quebec more closely to Canada. On the other hand, gains achieved by the PQ—including a constitutional amendment affecting school boards, and agreements strengthening Quebec's powers over immigration and manpower—were supported by the Liberals.

**The polls don't lie.** Perhaps not, but some respondents do. This election marks the third straight time, including the 1994 election and 1995 referendum, that polls showing a large sovereignist lead have not held up. One explanation offered by pollsters: it is not always socially acceptable for respondents to admit to being federalist—as they may not bring publicly and vote another way privately.

But they, at least, can keep that information to themselves. The same cannot be said for journalists and pundits who report the campaign explaining why the PQ was headed for a blowout victory. That did not happen. For journalists—always astounded by self-deaths, that can mean only one thing: the search has already begun for new "truths" to explain why.



Don't try to say voters: some political "truths" fail to hold up



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## Agricultural catastrophe

Collapsing farm incomes bring calls for an infusion of federal aid

BY JOHN GEDDES

**T**axpayers might be forgiven for wondering if a bonussic subject to be harvested in an atmosphere of crisis. Faced with a collapse in pork markets and low wheat prices, farmers are demanding hundreds of millions, maybe billions, in emergency government assistance. They have protested outside provincial legislatures and dispatched their lobbyists to Ottawa. American farmers, frustrated by the same price slump, are clamoring for protection from Canadian imports—raising fears that a trade war could worsen a bad situation. And at the centre of it all, the rookie federal agriculture minister, Lyle Vachell, himself a former farmer, is scrambling to satisfy his rural constituency. Last week, he took time out to try to reassure Canadians who might feel they have heard all that too many times before. "Neither farmers nor government want to step back into the past with what might be seen as an election, unsupportable or unrealistic bailouts for farmers," Vachell told the House agriculture committee.

But he offered few details to back up his promise to deliver a firm aid scheme with a difference. His one firm commitment: no money will go only to producers who suffer extraordinary declines in income. Vachell

wowed there will be no payments to farmers on the basis of, say, how many pigs they raised or how many hectares of wheat they planted. Instead, the program will be based on the losses shown on tax returns farmers file next spring. While that means it could be many months before Ottawa issues any cheques, Vachell argues the delay should pose no serious hardships—so long as creditors are confident the money is coming. "What is important," he told the committee, "is for producers to know as soon as possible that there will be some type of program there for them, so they can go to their suppliers and bankers and say 'Look, help us on the way.'"

And it almost certainly is Vachell is likely to gain cabinet approval for a package this week. Industry and government officials speculated Ottawa's share might amount to \$200 million over two years. Vachell expects the province to put up 40 cents for every 90 cents in federal money poured into a new program. And he has suggested he hopes to go beyond stopgap measures to imple-



Vachell: 'Help us on the way'

ment a new permanent farm-income safety net. But one senior federal official and other cabinet ministers, including Finance Minister Paul Martin, are skeptical about the need for any long-term plan that could raise the cost of the scheme into the billions. The official said Martin is more likely to approve a plan limited to helping out farmers who have undoubtedly been hurt this year, and to extending that support into 1999, when some forecasters expect pork and grain prices to re-

bound unusually low. Reluctance around the cabinet table for a more ambitious, multi-year program is hardly a surprise. After all, getting out of the old Cows rate grain transportation subsidy system just three years ago cost the federal government \$1.6 billion in transitional compensation to farmers—and was supposed to mark the start of a new era of drastically curtailed direct federal financial support for agriculture. As well, last year's year a new round of World Trade Organization negotiations will take aim at the whole range of

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## CANADA

international farm subsidies. Ottawa is pushing up to push hard at the WTO for lower subsidies in the United States and Europe—hard enough for a broad-based Canadian farm income support scheme.

Still, the current crisis shows how the boom-and-bust farming cycle makes it hard for governments to step out of the agriculture business. Industry officials estimate one-quarter of Canada's 18,000 to 20,000 pork producers have been hit hard enough that they are now trying to reconfigure new herds, flocks. No one is sure how many could be forced out of business in the current deep price trough without assistance. And even farmers who admit they have not exhausted their bank credit argue they need government help. "We farmed for 38 years and I have never seen a collapse in the hog industry of this nature," says Bob Vaags, who raises about 12,000 pigs a year on his large just east of Winnipeg. At the time last year, Vaags was getting about \$185 for every pig he sold—more than double the \$90 it costs for feed

during the roughly six months it takes to raise one per market. These days, the same animal is selling for just \$93, he said. That gap between feed costs and other expenses and today's porky market price adds up to a big going loss of \$2,000 a day on Vaags's farm.

Still, Vaags is solidly enough established that bankruptcy is not an imminent danger. But at age 64, he fears he might have to borrow heavily to cover his losses while he waits for prices to rebound—a hard prospect to accept for a farmer who has worked for decades to pay down the mortgage on a family operation he hopes to pass on to his son. "Whatever equity we've built up," he worries, "could be washed down the drain in six months."

Last year, the notion that an established, large-scale pork farmer could be facing such a bleak outlook would have seemed all but unthinkable. Hog farmers in Europe and North America were expanding to supply solid domestic demand and, especially, a booming Pacific Rim export market. Canadian farm

has year over 1987, while the U.S. output rose about 10 per cent. That expanding supply collided with the financial crisis in Asia, which forced consumers there to switch back from imported pork to locally grown rice and vegetables. The result: the price for live, lean Canadian hogs plummeted 80 per cent, from a peak of \$2 cents a pound in the summer of 1997 to 52 cents a pound last month, according to the Toronto Dominion Bank's commodity price index.

Some observers argue Vanciel could let the least efficient farmers go out of business. "It is the worst situation for hogs that we've seen in a generation," says University of Guelph agricultural economist Wayne Howard. "And yet it's still part of the cyclical nature of agriculture markets." Howard says the biggest and best pork producers, like Vaags, can survive the downturn. As for the smaller, more vulnerable farmers? "It doesn't make sense to keep them on life support in an increasingly competitive world market. If they can't weather a downturn like this," Howard says, "then this is an opportunity for them to realize that they should be doing something else."

The call to let the current crisis cull the population of pork producers meets fierce resistance from the industry's national lobby group. "We're experiencing something way beyond normal market variations," insists Martin Rice, executive director of the Can-



### Confronting an excruciating choice

Growing Meek had heard the horror stories. Pig farmers like himself gassing their animals, or shooting them, because pork prices had dropped so low that the producers could no longer afford to even feed their livestock. Meek, who runs a hog operation near Acme, 80 km northwest of Calgary, is hating too. Along with his partner, Yolande Desnoed, he breeds to 3,000 sows and markets about 6,300 hogs each year. With the recent crash in pork prices—down 60 per cent in the last year—Meek estimates he is losing about \$30,000 a month. Still, the reports of mass slaughter disturbed him. Determined to send out a more positive message, Meek spearheaded an effort that is seeing dozens of Alberta farmers donate slaughtered hogs to local food banks. "We would rather give our product away to those who cannot afford it," he says, "than give it away to those who can."

The gambit worked. In addition to drawing much-needed publicity to their plight, Meek and his fellow pork producers are helping meet the demand at inner-city food banks during the Christmas

**Desnoed (left) and Meek farmers are donating slaughtered hogs to food banks**

peak. But the goodwill gesture has done little to resolve Meek's immediate dilemma. If something doesn't change quickly, and dramatically, the 43-year-old farmer figures he has just a few weeks before being forced to an excruciating choice. "We have to decide whether to keep throwing money at this thing," he says, "or to shut it down, and lose even more money."

Meek, who bought the hog operation from his father after nearly two decades of helping to run it, is hoping that events will help him avoid that particular Rub-

icon. Two key factors are an expected short-term financial relief package from Ottawa and clear signals from the United States that there is a willingness to cut back on the high levels of pork production in that country that are helping to glut the market and depress prices. "If that doesn't happen, we could lose this industry in Canada," says Meek.

For Meek, that would also mean losing a way of life he has come to cherish. "It's in your blood," he says. "I love getting up in the morning and going to work with my animals." But it's not something that necessarily appeals to the next generation. Between them, Meek and Desnoed have six children, ranging in age from seven to 22. None, they say, is considering taking up the family business. "You don't see many young people getting into farming," says Meek. "If they've grown up seeing pigs so many bad times and so few good times that it's lost its appeal."

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## CANADA

dian Park Canada, a key group involved in efforts with Vancland on its marine-wildlife package. "We're trying to help those farmers who have good farms, who in a cycle of normal hog prices would be OK."

Just as the biggest pork producers could probably survive without a government lifeline, so could past grain growers. The price of wheat has slumped to an average of \$3.82 a bushel so far in 1998, down from \$3.50 in 1997, and far below the robust \$3.75 average price in 2005. But some other key crops are enjoying strong markets. Canola, for example, has been selling for an average of nearly \$420 a tonne on the Winnipeg Commodity Exchange this year—holding steady in the healthy price range it has commanded ever since demand for the oilseed jumped in the early 1990s. Shelley Jones, Saskatchewan policy manager for the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association, says a trend to diversifying into canola and other crops is one reason more wheat farmers are holding their ground. "Our members haven't been running the phone all the time saying they are in trouble," Jones told Meleis.

The current crisis is raising questions about the apparent inadequacy of the big farm support program already run by Ottawa and the provinces—the Net Income Stabilization Account. Under NISA, a farmer can expect up to \$5,500 a year in a special fund. Government's match that amount and guarantee a high interest rate on the farmer's contribution. Producers can then withdraw up to \$55,000 any year in which their farm income drops below the average of the previous five.

But that is not enough in many cases. Young, for example, says that withdrawing the allowed maximum would cover only about 10 days of his ongoing losses. He suggests that letting him take out the entire \$125,000 he has stashed in his NISA account would make more sense. Federal officials hint that relaxing the rules for withdrawing NISA monies is one measure they are now studying. But even a more flexible NISA will not alone solve the problem. One senior agriculture department official estimated 40,000 to 50,000 farmers do not have enough money in their NISA accounts to offset this year's income crunch.

These are the farmers the new program seems to have to reach if the vocal agricultural lobby is to be satisfied. And Vancland is expected to deliver. After all, he gave up farming near Belleville, Ont., just 13 years ago to run successfully for a federal seat—recently enough still to be considered a farmer, by farmers. Plucked from the backbenches just last year, he now faces his first real challenge since he took on the agriculture portfolio: He has first real orders. The price cuts that have pushed thousands of farmers in the United States have also put one former farmer's subject credibility in the line. □

## Bruce Wallace



## With friends like these

Remarkable, isn't it, the way Quebec's federalist business leaders slithered into the tall grass at the first scent that Jean Charest might not win? This was the same supposedly powerful elite that, right after his victory in another March, to save business from the troubling prospect of another Lucien Bouchard reelection as separatist. They even took modest bows at the time for having pulled a few strings for their sweet chums to make it happen.

Last February, with then-Liberal Leader Daniel Johnson seriously beset for a defeat, a group of businessmen met with Bouchard and begged him to drop his reelection plans. In return, they said, business would support the Parti Québécois. When the premier refused, Charest became the business community's last salvation in the federalist. One wonders what combination of inducements and threats persuaded to encourage Johnson to step aside—but given that industrialist Marcel Dufré later publicly threatened federal departure in the federalist. "Things would dry up if Charest stayed in Ottawa, you can bet it wasn't subtle. The deal done. The chairman and CEOs dashed off cheques to the provincial Liberal party and set back to watch their world unfold as it should."

Many business leaders have a surprisingly grasp of politics. And they can read polls. The supreme elite. As Charest's numbers slipped over the next few weeks, the business community shifted from sight. With the Quebec government such a powerful player in the provincial economy, few top executives want to leave the appearance of openly crossing the line. "I don't want to be seen as a lobbyist in the public eye," he says. "I'm likely to hold on to power. By the time Charest gave an economic speech to the Quebec City Chamber of Commerce luncheon in September, many chief executives were keeping their heads down. "They told us they were too busy and sent their vice-presidents instead," muttered one Quebec City Liberal. And when Bouchard attacked Charest's use of public platforms on the matter, officials contended that it was "the wrong" economy unsettled by Quebec, Charest's fearless global capitalists remained mute.

After the Quebec debate, in which Charest failed to dismantle the Bouchard threat as hoped, many of Montreal's business leaders also planned schedule conflicts and slipped an early morning "Business meets Charest" sign rally. Former Montreal Canadiens star Brian Satered, now a prominent businessman who organized the event, was almost alone in urging public praise for Charest's devotion to federalism. At a private lunch a few days later, Charest had to endure griping from many of the donors or so top business leaders at the table.

But the business community's most aggressive disavowal was to never offering up strong candidates from its ranks. Credible business representatives on the Liberal slate could have buttressed Charest's claims that political instability hurts the province's economy. Charest needed just one legitimate star, not a superstar. He got none. "Business didn't come through," says one Charest adviser. "They didn't deliver what they had asked of him."

Charest bears some responsibility for that failure. He was too busy with his trading of his big-wheeler friends. At the moment of his greatest leverage, last March, before he made his choice to leave Ottawa and with the business community in heat at the prospect of his arrival, Charest should have demanded a list of people ready for being his sacrifice on his team. He should, he would, be asked for a pledge that Telegraph chairman Charles Satered would return candidates for the Liberal. Satered never returned them up. "It's not a good idea," he was often told. "Why don't you read?"

Committing people to take time out from lucrative business careers for the least mutually rewarding world of politics is difficult these days. And cities everywhere tend to try to fix things on all works out fine—for them—on the end. But this was supposed to be more than just another election. It was going to be the great fight to end constitutional adventures and let Quebecers prosper again. If Charest was told no less. Upstart your family and change your dreams, they told him. Your country and your province need you. He said yes, and deserved better than the cowardly disappearing act he got in return.

**Quebec business leaders slithered into the tall grass at the first scent that Jean Charest might not win**

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## Canada NOTES

### WEST COAST VICTORY

In a politically charged decision, the Canadian Olympic Association formally endorsed Vancouver-Whistler over rivals Calgary and Quebec City as its choice to seek the 2010 Winter Olympic Games. Supporters of Quebec City's bid claimed Vancouver organizers exploited taxpayers' over a future sovereignty referendum that arose during the Quebec provincial election campaign.

### RAVINE RAPIST ARREST

Police in southwestern Ontario charged a 40-year-old Hamilton man with rape and murder in the 1981 death of nursing aide Diane Werendowicz. Although Robert Badgown faces charges only in that case and an other 1981 attack, police said they had no doubt he was the "same rapist," responsible for 11 violent sexual assaults around Hamilton between 1980 and 1987, many of them in a local park ravine.

### ANOTHER OILPATCH BOMB

The fifth bomb in the last six months in northwestern Alberta left a huge hole in an oil-service road near Hynes, 490 km northwest of Edmonton. No one was injured. Over the past two years, more than 900 acts of vandalism have been committed against oil and gas company properties in the province, apparently motivated by the belief that the companies are polluting land and endangering human health through their activities.

### SAVING THE SABLE GULLY

In Halifax, federal Fisheries Minister David Anderson announced plans to protect Sable Gully, 7,770 square kilometres of ocean off the coast of Nova Scotia that is home to 200 northern bottle-nosed whales. The submarine canyon is in the centre of an area currently undergoing underwater oil and gas exploration, including the \$2-billion Sable Offshore Energy Project.

### WHITE TO RETIRE

Bob White, president of the Canadian Labour Congress, announced that he will retire from his post. White, 64, who has served as president of the 2.8-million-member union organization for six years, was formerly head of the Canadian Auto Workers. The CLC will elect a new president at its annual convention next May.

## A setback for Regan's defence

For the first time at Gerald Regan's sex-crimes trial, the Crown presented corroborative testimony reaching back to the time of an alleged assault. Retired Halifax police officer David Best and his wife Linda, a provincial corrections officer, both told the court that Regan's third accuser—a 47-year-old woman who says the former Nova Scotia premier attempted to rape her in 1969—formed them of the attack on the day it occurred. In contrast, the other two complainants, who say they were sexually assaulted by him in separate incidents in 1976, when they were 16, testified that they had told only each other.

David Best testified that he was a seven-year police veteran and a neighbour of the complainant's family when her mother appeared at his door and brought the Bests to her home to hear the troubling complaint. Neither the complainant, then 18 years old, nor her mother wanted Best to launch a formal investigation, so he did nothing. "I didn't feel I had a complaint because I didn't have a complainant,"

he said. "Then I made a decision on my own not to go forward. I was just as hazy about that."

The Bests mentioned the allegation to no one for 26 years. In 1995, after hearing of the police investigation that eventually led to the eight charges Regan now faces, they finally approached the RCMP.

Cross-examined by defence lawyer Edward Greenspan, David Best acknowledged that he had lived near the complainant for only six months and could not say whether she was a truthful person. The Bests' account of what she told them in 1969 closely matched what she had told the jury earlier—Regan exposed himself, then he is to the floor, attempted to pull down her panties and ejaculated on the carpet. But Greenspan, who has attacked the credibility of all three complainants, devoted most of his

questioning to one discrepancy in the testimony. In her April 1998 statement to police, Linda Best declared that the girl had told her Regan exposed himself after the struggle, rather than before as Regan now says. For more than an hour, Greenspan pressed his point that Best had changed her story over time.



David Best, a retired police officer, testified that he was a seven-year police veteran and a neighbour of the complainant's family when her mother appeared at his door and brought the Bests to her home to hear the troubling complaint.

### GOVERNMENT

## The politics of EI

Finance Minister Paul Martin and Human Resources Minister Patricia Murray announced a \$1.1-billion reduction in Employment Insurance premiums for 1999. This Liberal government's new cuts, after months of criticism from the opposition and provinces over the government's decision to freeze the amount of money that EI raises from premiums and the amount it pays out in benefits. The cut is modest, even if Ottawa will make its \$7 billion more through the plan than it will pay out this year, and far from being real proof, critics stopped up their attacks. Get no Conservatives, Premier Mike Harris, who was hit a big of losses to a news conference to denigrate the small scale of the tax relief—amounting to no more than 1995 a year for individuals—called the reduction "insulting."

Marion O'Connor, a former Liberal Ontario Conservative, said: "It's sort of like, when I'm separate to your party and you give you don't let you can't let home."

## A chairman steps down

The troubled AFPEC inquiry, shut down indefinitely on Nov. 26 by the Federal Court of Canada with it can have claims of bias made against inquiry chairman Gerald Martin, suffered another blow late last week when Martin resigned. His reason: the RCMP Public Complaints Commission—which established his three-member panel to assess accusations of excessive police force during last year's AFPEC summit—had improperly interfered with his work. Martin emphatically denied that he quit over the bias allegations, which arose after a Maxxair client he heard Martin tell companions at a Seattle-based casino last spring that he had concerns over police actions. "I have never done anything improper," he told reporters last week.

Among the members of intervention team, Martin was the claim that Shirley Stirling, the commission's chairwoman, appointed a lawyer he had never met to represent him in Federal Court. "The chair intervened by picking the counsel. That is highly improper," he said. Martin added he was also angered when Healey asked panel members to read a letter at the hearings entering the lawyer for the commission, Chris Goodwin, in support of the legal requests of resident protesters. "It caused me a great deal of concern that somebody is writing things that I am supposed to merely read and react to," Martin declared. "I am an independent person."



World

# CHILDHOOD LOST

**S**quatting on a straw mat beneath a mat's lee in the northern Ugandan town of Gulu, Opik Patrick, a spindly 13-year-old boy with a shy smile and a tattered "Miami Beach" T-shirt, begins his story. "I was sleeping with my brother on a grass patch in the bush when the rebels surrounded us," he says. "They said we had to come with them—or else they would kill us." Patrick was 10 then. For the next three years, he lived as an auxiliary rebel in the Lord's Resistance Army, or LRA, out of the world's most brutal terrorist cults. Led by an eccentric former Irish boxer, the supposedly Christian group routinely kidnaps children, forcing the boys to kill and the girls to become sex slaves. For Patrick, it was a story of a childhood lost to violence. "Once we caught three prisoners," he recalls. "They had to be flogged. One of them pleaded for mercy. He even cried that he wanted to join us. But our commander did not believe him. I was ordered to shoot this man in the back of the head. So I did."

In the stark East African border region between government-ruled Uganda and Sudan, the LRA has abducted at least 8,000 Ugandan children during a 15-year drive to overthrow Uganda's sworn enemy Patrick's late cousin, the LRA, which is supported by Sudan's fundamentalist Muslim regime, brought him tortures deep into

Sudan. There, Patrick received rudimentary military training to fight the Sudan People's Liberation Army, a band of southern Sudanese rebels supported by Uganda. "I was told I had to kill the Dinka," he says, referring to the dominant ethnic group in the enemy force.

As he speaks, it has been a week since Patrick escaped from the LRA. He now lives at a locally run rehabilitation center for former LRA captives. But most abducted children are stuck in Sudan, their lives subject to the endless struggle between the warring sides. For a while, recently, the Uganda-backed Sudan rebels accused about 100,000 of them of being traitors that crushed two major LRA camps in southern Sudan. But now the tables are turning. In November, at least 200 LRA combatants crossed into Uganda to attack military posts and abduct more child soldiers. Last week, according to local reports, about 80 LRA rebels kidnapped an unknown number of adults and children near Patrick's town of Gulu. On the same day, another group attacked a funeral shortly after the burial, beat up the mourners—even looting some of them—and stole all the food.

The children who have escaped provide a chilling insight into life inside the bizarre LRA organization. At the Gulu Support the Children Organization rehabilitation camp, Patrick is one of 37 escapes, all between ages 10 and 18. The number of kids is low because most

## A rebel cult kidnaps kids as soldiers and sex slaves

escape only when the LRA raids Uganda—and for months the rebels have remained mostly in Sudan. "If those children escape inside Sudan, they'll never make it back," says an United Nations aid worker. "If they're not eaten by wild animals, they'll die of hunger." But escape is a risky proposition, even in Uganda. For those caught, the punishment is usually death.

Olelio Bili, a 13-year-old who spent a little more than a year in the LRA, had to watch as two LRA members laid an alleged escapee down on the ground, then crushed his head with multiple club blows. "They told me, 'If you try to escape, this is what will happen to you,'" Olelio says softly in Acholi, the local language. It takes Olelio an hour to recount his experience with the LRA. Some of his memories require great description, most are etched in just a few words. "Life was hard," he says. "We had to cut brows from trees," headlong eye contact, he flashes the hand of his trademark a small warlock.

Olelio escaped in the confusion of a shootout between his small band of rebels and Ugandan soldiers. "This is how it happened," he says. "We had an ambush at night near the Karama bridge," west of Gulu. "In the morning at 10 o'clock, attack came, all of Caco-Gulu, and we attacked it. But there was an armed personnel carrier full of Ugandan soldiers driving behind it. When the soldiers began shooting, our group scattered. I ran down a path and cut across other soldiers. I raised my hands and yelled, 'I surrender, don't shoot. I'm escaping from the rebels.'" The Ugandan military detained Olelio for a month at the local Mubale police station to question him about LRA hideouts.

Escape is paid the first battle being former child soldiers like Olelio. Many children abducted into the LRA have been forced to kill friends, even family members—the LRA way of discouraging them from escaping. This is less well-known here. Parents are scared of their own children, teachers brand them "rebels," and villagers fear that the LRA will return to take revenge. "And we have a share of food here," says George Orono, the Gulu program coordinator. "When a child comes, he is like a butterfly over much to feed." More than 400,000 people have been displaced in northern Uganda because of the war. Much of the richly fertile land has been lost.

Perhaps the most notorious LRA practice is the taking of concubines. Days after 13-year-old Rose Abako was abducted

by the rebels in 1994, she was given a "husband." "The man in the camp all put their shirts on a pole," remembers Rose, now 16. "The new girls including me, had to pack a shirt. And the shirt we got would be our husband's." That is how Rose married Patrick Nyekia, an LRA commander in his late 20s or early 30s. There was no ceremony—and she was 10 years old. "I did not want to have sex," says Rose, who was then a virgin. "I related the first time, as he took me. I did not refuse sex."

Rose was one of Nyekia's seven wives. She describes the other wives as "friends," but concedes they never much talked to each other. For three years, Rose carried huge bags—the girls' main duty apart from sex—as the rebels moved from camp to camp. Then, one day in August last year, Nyekia was killed. "I felt this was my chance," Rose says. "I could get away." It was not until a year later, during a battle in Uganda, that Rose escaped. But Rose was there in the line, and the wound never properly healed. She now walks with a crutch. Three of the other wives are still prisoners with the rebel group.

LRA chief Joseph Kony, who at times dresses in women's clothing and claims he speaks directly with God, insists he is misunderstood. "With a following of about 1,000 combatants, he says he seeks to rule all Uganda," according to the US-Congress. "But he has also called for the creation of a new state in northern Uganda—the Nile Republic. In October, the LRA split into two factions. The new LRA, Democratic, led by longtime LRA war planner Ronald Oton Konyak, is said to have attracted several senior officers who disagree with Kony's brutal treatment of children. The LRA office in London has launched a publicity and fundraising campaign to punish its limited impact."

The map in front of the LRA, which is dominated by Acholi tribesmen, spawned several natural Acholi support by near time to violence. At economic boom has swept much of Uganda, bringing annual growth rates of 50 per cent or higher, but it has yet to reach the impoverished border region. Most Acholi northerners accuse the government, which is dominated by southern tribes, of neglecting them. President Yoweri Museveni, often seen internationally as a role model for a new generation of African leaders, received his northern votes in the 1996 election. "If the rebels didn't burn and kill people, they would get a lot of support here," says Lauren Steven, a nutritionist at Gulu Hospital.

Museveni has released negotiations with the LRA, which he refers to as "Sudan's Resistance Army." He now craves the insurgency, and there is growing evidence that Uganda's military government is in Sudan. But Museveni's government is now also embroiled in the war in neighboring Congo, where it supports rebels trying to overthrow President Laurent Kabila. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan recently proposed a ceasefire, but so far it has not taken. The Congo conflict, centered near Uganda's southwestern border, has left northern Uganda exposed to attacks by Sudan and the LRA. Some Ugandan officials are now providing an amnesty program for the rebels, an alternative to a military crackdown.

As the residents of Gulu mull over the inevitable return of the rebels, Opik Patrick looks forward to the day he can go home. He is not sure if his parents know that he is still alive; they have not yet come to visit him. He is especially anxious to return to school. "I want to make friends," he says, picking at the stone rat. At that moment, a soccer game gets started nearby and Patrick's face lights up. He wants to join in the game. For Patrick and the other former child soldiers of the LRA, there is still time to be a kid.

An escapee gets supplies at the Gulu centre, ex-LRA captives (below) meet



STEFAN LAURSEN in Gulu

# Laid off and bitter

The new arrivals, bent over under the weight of the bags piled high on their backs, steadily stream out of Beijing's main train station. Soon, they will join dozens of others on a nearby street corner, where people start lining up at 5 a.m. on an unimproved bike market. Many have pinned pieces of paper to their jackets describing their professions—teachers, teachers, teachers. China's drastic economic reforms have forced the closure of hundreds of state-owned companies and pushed the number of unemployed to 250 million. Tens of millions of others who pass the country, those near the station will spend most of the day in a futile search for work. As he paced the sidewalk, Guo, a former translator, told Macdonald he was laid off when the Korean company he worked for went under after the Asian financial crisis. Unable to find a job, he often gets drunk, he said, adding bitterly: "I am so depressed."

The anger—and hopes—of millions of unemployed people like Guo are focused squarely on China's remarkable economic czar, Premier Zhu Rongji. Operating more like a capitalist CEO than a communist cadre, Zhu has taken charge of China's economy and propelled it into the only high growth nation left in otherwise Asia. But the millions of high-powered drivers are growing at the same rate as the vast unemployed. If he fails, senior Chinese officials fear that a country where everything happens on a huge scale could face unprecedented social unrest.

Taking on formidable challenges in rushing new to the main once known as "One-Stop Zhu." As the mayor of Shanghai in the late 1980s, Zhu wanted to rebuild the economy of the ancient port city. He needed foreign experts to assist in his plan work, but businessmen often stood in his way. To get around them, Zhu, who is described by many diplomats as being as tough and uncompromising, let nothing stand in his way. He quickly set up a single office through which foreign investors would receive a simple stamp or "stamp" of approval.

Zhu's success at rebuilding Shanghai helped him soar up the ranks of the Communist party. Last March, he became premier, displacing most powerful positions in the country. Zhu is China's first real economic leader," says Howard Balloch, Canadian ambassador to China. "He did not make the Long March, he did not rise through backroom politics. He is the first



Unemployed at Guangzhou railway station: growing unrest and unreported demonstrations

Chinese leader to come to power with the credentials of an economic leader."

Even so, none of the obstacles Zhu faced in Shanghai can compare to what he now faces as he steers his country of 1.2 billion people towards a free market. Even with most of Asia gripped by a severe recession, Zhu last week said he would press ahead with his bold plan to reform the economy by closing hundreds more government-owned companies next year. While he is pushing that the emerging private sector will absorb the lagging of unemployed, Zhu must also introduce a tax system that would generate enough money to finance a Communist-style social safety net, pension payments, welfare and unemployment benefits.

As he maintains the reform, Zhu is walking a tightrope between the promise of future growth—and political instability created by mass unemployment. To be true and keep as many people working as possible, he has authorized a massive

spending program to build roads, bridges and other public works. That may turn out to be a shrewd move that will help China leap ahead in development. "These guys are good Keynesians," says Balloch. "The test will be as the bridges they build and transportation lines they lay. We have seen dumb spending, but also evidence of smart spending."

Zhu has also surprised many economists by ordering the nation's banks to keep lending to ailing state-owned firms, instead of shutting them down as planned and laying off workers. But he may have little choice, given the cry for jobs. "The Chinese economy is like a bicycle," says Wei Li, an expert on Chinese business at Duke University in Durham, N.C. "If you don't keep peddling and give it some momentum, many people will fall below the poverty line."

The social and political problems that come with high unemployment have already taken root beneath an overcast in Beijing where a jobless worker named Zhang



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and about 40 people are cramped out—three persons backgrounds made obvious by their poor attire and ruddy complexions. They spread most of the day scavenging for bottles, shrimp shoves and selling fresh flowers. At night, they play cards and final by fall asleep on bamboo mats covered with dirty Chinese quilts in temperatures that just were in the 40s.

Even if they did work, most will be forced to live in run-down dormitories or hotels and will receive just subsistence

As he often did when he was the no-nonsense mayor of Shanghai, Zhu complained on his tour of Liaooning about corruption and waste. Unpaid and austere, Zhu was raised by an uncle in native province in Changsha, the capital of Hunan province—the same home town as Mao Tse-tung. Trained as an engineer at Qinghua University in Beijing, he joined this Communist party but was purged as a "rightist" in 1957 and again in 1963 for criticizing government policy and Mao's teachings.

## China's reform czar acts more like a capitalist CEO than a Communist cadre



**Zhu: A risky strategy that has brought high growth and huge areas of instability**

opposition political party since the 1949 Communist victory. The divisions came to La Puig, boss of the National People's Congress and the most conservative of China's senior leaders, released remarks assailing the opposition's efforts, criticizing Western democracy and defending his role in the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown on student demonstrators. The nation understood that even with economic reforms, the Communist party will continue to deal harshly with threats to its power—especially at a time of rampant overpopulation.

Continuing his delicate balancing act, Zhu last week toured the province of Liaoning, one of the centers of China's heavy industry. Once again, he called on managers of state-owned companies to become efficient enough to compete with private firms—even if that means mass layoffs. Zhu said he was of the opinion: With typical directness, Zhu said that managers of state firms that lose money for two years in a row would be sacked.

economy growing at something near its target of eight per cent a year, or risk even further unemployment. Currently, the official figure is 7.6 per cent.

As long as China's economy is expanding by at least seven per cent annually, many analysts say it can tolerate the 150 million jobless people now leaving the country. But Duke University's says if growth slides below five per cent—and some experts think the true figure may be dwindling towards that level—the unemployment rate will skyrocket and political problems will mount. "Below five per cent you will effectively have a recession," says Li. "That means people going on to the job market, not find employment at five per cent."

Still, many economists say that even if growth slows slightly, China will have avoided the worst of the economic downturn that has swamped its neighbors. It also means, says Li, that China will not have to devalue its currency in 1999, a move that could destabilize the fragile economic recovery now under way in the region. Canadian businessmen are also banking on Zhu to steer China safely through the Asian financial crisis. In November, he met with Prime Minister Jean Chrétien. Zhu lauded expanding trade between the two countries and also raised diplomatic relations with the long-despised Canada as China's "best friend." He later told a group of Canadian businessmen that

China would not devalue next year, and politely promised to "compensate" speculators who are betting the renminbi will drop in value.

Even so, some make-or-break challenges loom for Zhu. Some experts are fearful of the huge amount of lending to failing state enterprises, just to keep people working. In favoring so much good money after bad, they argue, China risks a banking crisis that could plunge the millions who rely on the region. Others focus on the urgent need for health coverage and old-age pensions for people who used to be taken care of by state-owned firms. "My main concern is not that there is too much money going to enterprises that cannot pay their debts," says one Western diplomat. "But whether they are taking steps to create a safety net." Until they do, Zhu will have to weigh the speed of his economic revolution against growing social unrest across China.

TOM PENNELL, with PAUL ROBINSON in Beijing

## World NOTES

### TOP SERB CAPTURED

Bosnian-Serb Gen. Ratko Mladic was captured by U.S. troops in the northeast of the country and transferred to The Hague to face the Yugoslav war crimes tribunal, which accuses him of organizing mass murder. Mladic is the most important war crimes suspect yet arrested in Bosnia. In 1995, his troops stormed the UN safe haven of Srebrenica, where more than 7,000 Muslims men and boys disappeared.

### FAULDER PLEA DENIED

Texas Gov. George W. Bush rejected a plea from U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to delay the execution of Stan Paulder. The 65-year-old Canadian is sentenced to die on Dec. 10 by lethal injection for the 1975 stabbing death of wealthy oil rancher Fred Philip. Albright, who discussed the matter with Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy, said the case was "unusually troublesome" to warrant a delay. But Bush has not intervened in any executive since becoming governor in 1994.

### FINDING LOOTED ART

A conference in Washington to assess stolen from Holocaust victims by the Nazis agreed to 11 principles that could lead to the return of looted art. The 44 countries involved will pressure each work to the original owners can claim them. The Museum of Modern Art in New York City estimates that 110,000 pieces of art worth \$15 billion to \$40 billion may have been stolen.

### INDIAN FILM ANGER

Two supporters of the militant Hindu party Shiv Sena were arrested after threats showing a Indian-themed movie by Toronto film-maker Deepa Mehta were attacked in Bombay and New Delhi. The 1996 film *Earth* is about a love affair between two Indians in India, which Shiv Sena called "an insult to Indian culture." The Indian government said the movie back to the censor board, which had earlier cleared it.

### ADMIRAL SENTENCED

U.S. Rear Admiral John Sead, 64, agreed to enter into a reduced prison term to serve 30 days after house arrest, which Shiv Sena called "an insult to Indian culture." The Indian government said the movie back to the censor board, which had earlier cleared it.



**ORPHAN TRAGEDY:** Philippine youngsters gather outside the charred remains of an orphanage in Manila, where a raging fire killed at least 38 people, mostly children. Some had sought for help from second-story windows, but helpless neighbors were unable to open a panicked main gate. The fire, believed to have been caused by faulty wiring, claimed the lives of 35 children; another 43 survived. They were all due to attend a Christmas party the next day. Many died in their beds, while the bodies of others were found huddled and trapped in the corners of rooms, clutching each other in a final embrace.

## A final win in the turbot war

The final skirmish in the long-running battle with Spain over the Atlantic turbot (fishery) ended in victory for Canada when the World Court in The Hague threw out the Spanish case. Spain had asked the court to hear its complaint over Canada's 1995 arrest of the trawler *Estimote* in international waters off Newfoundland's Grand Banks. The verdict, in which a Canadian gambler filed shots across the Estimote's bow and around fisheries officers boarded and seized its catch, spared a diplomatic row that pitted Canada against Spain and the European Union. It also made the Philippines Minister Maria Teresa a hero to many Canadians, as well as to people in parts of Europe where overfishing by foreign factory trawlers was devastating local fisheries.

In a 12 to 5 ruling, the judges supported Canada's position that the court did not have jurisdiction to hear Spain's case. Under the court's charter, countries must agree to accept its authority. Canada has done so, but filed an exception to its own jurisdiction to the fishery. While Justice Minister Anne McLellan said the decision puts the turbot issue to rest, Spanish spokesman Aurelio Salazar warned that it should not be seen as support for armed intervention in the sea. Said Salazar: "The right of our ships to fish in international waters has not been affected by this decision."

## The drive to impeach gathers momentum

In a sudden reversal, the House Judiciary committee dropped its plan to investigate U.S. President Bill Clinton's role in Democratic campaign financing, possibly clearing the way for the House of Representatives to vote on his impeachment by Christmas. The committee will now focus on whether Clinton kept and obstructed justice in his attempt to cover up a sexual relationship with Monica Lewinsky. If the full House votes for impeachment, the issue would move to the Senate, where Clinton would be tried. Last week, momentum appeared to be with impeachment forces, while a counterproposal merely to censure Clinton was losing ground.

# UNION OF GIANTS

## Exxon and Mobil create a colossus

BY WARREN KARGATTA

On a chilly spring day in 1911, the decision reverberated through the executive offices of the Standard Oil Trust like a thunderclap: the world's largest oil company was to be broken into 34 corporate pieces by order of the U.S. government. Upon hearing this, John D. Archbold, a hard-drinking associate of founder John D. Rockefeller, began to wheeze. Sincere does not record whether Archbold, noted for both his sense of humor and his remarkable acute ear, was willing to brook the breakup or because he saw some secret joke in a development his colleagues found catastrophic. But there is a Rockefeller legend for the people who created one of the greatest industrial combinations of all time. Archbold would surely be wheezing now—in an understatement. For what the U.S. government had split standard in 1911, market forces in 1998 were joining back together. Two of the biggest pieces of the Rockefeller oil trust, Standard of New Jersey and Standard of New York—now known as Esso Corp. and Mobil Corp.—had agreed to merge.

The course of 87 years has brought deeper changes to the companies than just their names. Both have developed worldwide scope and both have moved their headquarters. Exxon to the Dallas suburb of Irving and Mobil to the Washington state suburb of Everett. But Archbold and Rockefeller might appreciate the irony that part of the motivation for the \$124.3-billion deal comes from the westcoast power giant QWEST, which ended the related fuel oil prices. The very creation of the trust in the closing decades of the last century was based on Rockefeller's belief that producers of oil would never be able to resist the discipline to control prices for very long and that only powerful corporations such as his could bring order to price-cutting chaos. With crude prices now at their lowest since more than a decade, Exxon and Mo-



THE WORLD'S TOP OIL COMPANIES			
1997 revenues in billions			
EXXON CORP. (U.S.)	\$146.8	TOTAL S.A. (France)	43.0
MOBIL CORP. (U.S.)	80.8	PETROBRAS SA (Braz./U.S.)	37.1
combined		combined	71.9
ROYAL DUTCH/HELLER GROUP (The Netherlands)	\$78.2	EXXON MOB. (U.S.)	63.8
THE BRITISH PETROLEUM CO. PLC (London)	59.4	ELF AGRIENNE (France)	58.6
AMOCO CORP. (U.S.)	44.2	ENI SPA (Italy)	52.5*
combined		combined	44.2
CHEVRON CORP. (U.S.)	43.5		-11.5*

Mobil-owned offshore platform, a more complicated merger picture in Canada

bil hope the merger will produce cost savings of at least \$4.2 billion a year. "The world has changed," and Mobil chairman Lucio Natta says the agreement was announced. "The new things are behind us." The deal creating the world's largest corporation will also bring together the Canadian offspring, Imperial Oil Ltd., controlled by Exxon, and Mobil Oil Canada Ltd., a wholly owned subsidiary of its U.S. parent. Imperial, based in Toronto, is Canada's oldest and largest oil company with operations at all sectors of the industry; Calgary-based Mo-

bil, with no offshore or gas stations, is the industry leader in offshore exploration and production on the East Coast.

The Exxon-Mobil marriage is just the latest in a hectic pace of corporate union this year—as the oilfield and other industries—as companies in Canada and around the world try to come to terms with the impact of globalization, the Asian economic crisis and frantic technological change. Also last week, Total SA—the second-largest French oil company—announced plans to buy Belgian-owned French HSA SA, making it the world's fourth-largest company. As well, Germany's Deutsche Bank AG intends to acquire U.S.-based Bancorp First of New York City. For 555.5 billion, Germany's largest financial institution, "Banco industries may be very misnamed now," says Bill Macdonald, a former Imperial Oil director and president of W.A. Macdonald Associates Inc. of Toronto, which advises companies on strategic planning.

If it receives regulatory approval, the new company will be known as Exxon Mobil Corp., and, while many operational details are being sorted out, one thing is clear: it will be stronger. It will produce more crude oil than Royal Dutch. Combined revenues last year were \$207 billion, about 40 per cent more than second-ranked Royal Dutch/Shell Group. It will have more than 40,000 gas stations and refine more oil than any other publicly traded company. The new entity will, officials say, have the corporate muscle to undertake huge projects in areas such as Russia and the North Sea, and the financial strength to withstand low prices. The deal will be accomplished by a share swap, with no cash changing hands. Exxon shareholders will own about 75 per cent of the new firm.

In Canada, it will take time before the exact details of the merger are known, according to officials of both companies. The Canadian end of the union is complicated by the fact that Exxon owns only 70 per cent of Imperial, enough for control but not enough to act without considering the interests of mostly shareholder-owned publicly traded company. "Imperial Oil is not a direct party to the agreement," says company spokesman Richard Offenberg. "The applications for what the merger means to Imperial Oil are yet to be determined."

Under the most likely Canadian scenario, industry experts say Imperial would buy Mobil's assets in Canada—but the price paid would have to respect the interests of all Imperial shareholders, not just Exxon. John Clarke, senior vice president of the think-tank company IAG in Toronto, says Mobil's Canadian operations at about \$4 billion. Last year, the Canadian assets in separate corporate bids would have made the goal at the U.S. parent to extract maximum profits by combining all operations worldwide.

Imperial Oil and Mobil Canada have operations that analysts think would work well together with almost no duplication. "The fit is very good," says Anne Welton, who helped build Mobil Canada and retired as president and CEO in 1990. She is now chairman of Sherrington Energy Management Inc., a Calgary oil company. Imperial, formed in 1986 to fight the entry of U.S. companies into the Canadian market and bought by Standard Oil of U.S., is Canada's largest oil producer; its biggest refiner, and has the country's largest network of 2,800 gas stations (there have been more moves from Standard Oil's infancy. It was Imperial that inherited the Alberta oil boom with its Leduc discovery in 1947, but the company has recently shifted attention away from conventional sources to Western Canada's oil-rich northern Alberta, including a 25-per-cent stake in Syncrude Canada Ltd., which produces more than 10 per cent of Canada's crude). Imperial is also a major producer of heavy oil.

Mobil's Canadian subsidiary, which started in 1940, operates solely in what the industry calls the upstream—the exploration and production of oil and natural gas, and has no refineries or gas stations. Most prominently the company is the lead partner in the Alberta oilfield on Newfoundland's

## THE GAS PRICE PLUNGE

It has been a windy fall in Vancouver. Rainstorms have filled trees and power lines, the skies are persistently gloomy; the economy is in a slump; and the Canucks hockey team seems to have seasonal affective disorder, losing much more than winning. One of the few bright spots has been at the fuel pump: a lower mainland gas war has ensured that Vancouverites are paying some of the lowest prices in Canada to run their cars. Prices plummeted at one point to just over 30 cents a litre for regular gasoline in some areas, and it could still be found last week at 35.9 cents. The average change, now 40.5 cents, was 55.3 cents a year ago.

One of the reasons for the low price is the arrival of Los Angeles-based Arco Refining Co. into the Vancouver market. Last May, Arco, as it is known, bought 52 Super-Seven Gas stations in the Lower Mainland and pushed down the price of gasoline to "meet consumers' needs." Arco has certainly stirred up the pot," says Andrew Jost, a staff member at M.J. Ervin & Associates, a Calgary company that tracks gas prices. When Arco moved to slash prices, other retailers followed, and prices fell as low as 35.9 cents per litre in early November. "The tax in Vancouver is 29 cents a litre, so when we were selling gas at 30.9 cents we were not even coming close to covering our costs," Jost says.

Petro-Canada senior analyst Lorne Struth, who conducts the company's oil and gas survey for the "100 Best" for consumers but it's back a long headstart for us." But Vancouver is not the only city enjoying lower rates. And it's not merely because of competition among retailers.

The Canadian average price at the pump is 50.6 cents a litre for regular, the lowest in nearly four years, according to M.J. Ervin findings. The reason is the continuing drop in the price of crude oil, which makes up at least one-quarter of the total cost. "We certainly seem to be in a period of lower raw material costs and greater retail efficiencies," says Brandon Hawley, vice-president of public affairs at the Canadian Petroleum Products Institute.

But Neil Strangman, a senior associate at M.J. Ervin, cautions that Canadians still are not getting the same price American drivers get, despite similar costs of refining. "Over 50 per cent of the price of gas is due to taxes," he says. "If we take away the taxes and we would pay over one third more than they do in the U.S." Gas prices in August averaged 40.5 cents per litre in the United States, compared with 51.3 cents in Canada. The average U.S. tax here was 16.8 cents, versus Canada's 28.9 cents.

Still, Canadian drivers welcome lower pump charges, particularly in big cities where the cost is always volatile. "Consumers have been irritated by the constant oscillation in prices," says Peter Dyck, chairman of the energy network of the Consumer's Association of Canada. The trick is to enjoy the lows while they last.

JENNIFER HARTLEY in Vancouver







## SKYDOME PLAYERS

## THE SHAREHOLDERS

Labatt Breweries of Canada	46.8%
Hospitality of Ontario Pension Plan	26.4%
Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce	10%
Toronto Investor Mortgage Bank through Controlled Media Investments Inc.	6.9%
Montreal Investors Retirement Advancement Fund	5.2%

## THE MAJOR CREDITORS

Seven Canadian Insurance companies	\$44 million in secured bonds
Province of Ontario through Stadium Corp.	\$25 million in loans and preferred shares
Peabody Capital (No.1 Ltd) of Toronto	\$14 million secured against receivables assets
Controlled Media Investments	\$1 million also against fixed assets

SOURCE: SKYDOME COURT DOCUMENTS BY POLYMERIZATION

*Clemens: watching the Jays (left) why can't Toronto's third most popular baseball attraction make enough money to pay its taxes?*

their claims in order to see SkyDome continue to operate at the style to which sport fans have become accustomed.

They have no choice. Labatt controls the Blue Jays, and without the team, the dome is just an empty tent. After all, how intrinsic value "How do you value the SkyDome without the Blue Jays?" one of the country's top real estate restructuring experts asked last week. "By this pound?" Some creditors' lawyers say the stadium's viability because even more uncertain after the ball club announced it would bow to the wishes of five-time Cy Young

winner Roger Clemens by trading the star pitcher to a team either closer to his Texas home or at least closer to a World Series bid. For some reason, the SkyDome leaves the Blue Jays, and in an effort to attract another major-league tenant, "what are you going to do with it?" one lawyer asks. "Build holes?"

Debt is not the problem. Adding the world's first fully retractable roof, the luxury hotel and a nine-cent floorside club increased the original cost of building the stadium from the \$140-million estimate to a final \$600 million in 1989. The obligation to service or repay much of this money, however, disappeared down the public drain when former Ontario premier Bob Rae's New Democratic government agreed to let \$321 million of its outstanding SkyDome debt

when the facility was prioritized for \$151 million in 1994. The far more fascinating question raised by the SkyDome bankruptcy is why, even before making any concession to the Jays, Toronto's third-most popular tourist attraction could not make enough money to pay its property taxes of \$6.33 million in arrears and service its financially modest mortgage (\$50 million at roughly 8 1/2 per cent).

Forget all that talk about exchange rates, dwindling baseball attendance and competing venues; the real challenge, creditors say, lies in the dome's secret business dealings with a small group of original investors who—in exchange for \$5 million each of tax-deductible money in 1988 and 1989—were given the use of a luxury Skybox plus the right to control just about every revenue-making business operation as attached to and spawled from the dome over the past 30 years.

These companies, controlled by sage of Central Canada's biggest business circles, have taken many times their original investment out of the stadium in the form of fees and profits on what, lawyers who have studied the deals say, is everything from operating the JumboTron to toilet paper sales and souvenir and magazine sales. These are what creditors, in SkyDome parlance, are the "secret documents" that creditors are seeking to uncover. "These contracts," but to date do not disclose identities or terms. "That information remains confidential," a SkyDome spokeswoman told *Northern's*. "We are in the process of reviewing all contracts, so we are uncomfortable releasing names or details at this time." These

# How the roof came off

'Sweetheart deals' are behind the SkyDome's insolvency

BY KIMBERLEY NOBLE

Nobody ever said building a domed stadium in downtown Toronto was going to be easy—or cheap. The owners and shakers who put the deal together back in the mid-1980s, and who subsequently sold SkyDome to Toronto's third-most popular tourist attraction, San Martin president Paul Godfrey, Elgin/Essex executive Trevor Bates, the Ontario province's instrumental in building and buying the dome all say the same thing: people who go back and look at what is on the record can see for themselves that the businessmen and politicians who promoted and financed the now-bankrupt domed stadium always said it would cost hundreds of millions of dollars. The issues were always how many hundreds of millions were going to be required—and who could be persuaded to put up the cash.

As most Ontario taxpayers have only too well, the answers turned out to be: (a) \$800 million and (b) the province's elected officials. Yet the way the politicians sold the story, they were not handing over buckets of cash without expecting to make a decent return; the more than \$300 million poured up by the province was supposed to be an investment. In time, as the value of the stadium and its prime tenant, the Toronto Blue Jays baseball club, soared into the fiscal stratosphere, taxpayers would share in the eventual upside—or so the argument went.

Now, almost a decade after the controversial collection opened its doors and first swing back that gleaming white roof, it is clear that this is never going to happen. Quite the opposite: The province—

and other outside investors—are on the verge of taking yet another financial haircut. And it is becoming equally clear, for the first time, that the SkyDome's problems can be attributed as much to so-called sweetheart deals with some of the country's largest corporate players as to changes in the business climate. Indeed, the true story of what one lender calls the "irresponsibility or capacity" involved in building and operating SkyDome is finally starting to trickle out.

Andrew SA, the parent Belgian brewery that in 1995 bought Labatt Breweries of Canada, which at that point owned 90 per cent of the ball club and 43.5 per cent of the SkyDome, has lost \$300 million on its investment in a formal \$100-million bid for the stadium was announced late last week by a group including former Jays general manager Pat Gillick. A Labatt spokesman says efforts to sell the team have been put on hold indefinitely as the Belgians look for ways to stop the bleeding. Labatt is determined to lower baseball losses from 1990's \$44 million to \$20 million next year—without, company officials say, further cutting the team's payroll.

Toward that end, Labatt and the Blue Jays spent the fall negotiating a new lease with SkyDome management, in the hope that lower rent and, even more important, a larger portion of ancillary revenues from advertising and souvenir sales would help achieve this goal.

But in reality it is do, so, the owners have to acquire out of the company new holding those rights. Their intention, to decline their steady pleasure dome investment and to work bankruptcy protection, a move that requires everybody with a financial stake in the stadium—corporate suppliers, shareholders, creditors and landlords—to sit down and decide who is willing to renounce some portion of

## SUBSIDIES FOR SPORT?

While creditors and consortia were trying to unravel the tangled mess of SkyDome last week, Liberal MP Dennis Mills was doing his best to be an even more complex problem—the declining fortunes of professional sports in Canada. Miles Commonsense subcommittee released its report on sport in Canada, which called for, among other things, an additional \$1 billion in public funds to support amateur athletics and refurbish aging sports facilities. More concretely, the committee also recommended up to \$5 million in annual subsidies for each of Canada's 30 National Hockey League franchises, and relief for the athletes themselves to offset higher Canadian taxes.

Critics immediately charged that against the needs of schools and hospitals, sports franchises were not worthy of government support. Mills said that was the initial reaction of most committee members, too, but they are now convinced that public help is necessary to keep NHL teams in Canada. In hearings last spring, team representatives explained that, through massive tax breaks and

venues built with public funds, U.S. franchises start each season with a huge bottom-line advantage. Their Canadian counterparts, which pay the higher local taxes and build their own buildings, cannot afford skyrocketing player salaries and, as a result, become less competitive on the ice.

Mills claims that supporting sports has an economic benefit. According to the report, sport is a \$5-billion-a-year industry that employs 250,000 Canadians and pays tens of millions of dollars annually in taxes. The document also suggests that investing in amateur and recreational sports will result in higher levels of fitness and lower health-care costs. Mills told reporters he would capsize "a total failure" if he were unable to get the recommendations included in Finance Minister Paul Martin's upcoming budget. But critics say Mills will have to overcome the prevailing sentiment that Ottawa has become nearly comatose. Echoing the comments of many others, Reform MP India Mark said bluntly that "it shouldn't be subsidizing millionaire hockey players and millionaires from other sports." Sports, it seems, is a tough sell in the political arena.

JAMES BRADON





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Paul Sobey (left) and Stewart in Stellarton, Nova Scotia's first family of business.

Frank Sobey and his offspring quarterly began in the water engineering spot. Empire, over 25 per cent-owned holding company, commands 17,000 employees and controls nearly \$2 billion in assets—which makes the low-key, cost-conscious clan almost as powerful and influential as Nova Scotia as the Irving and McCreath families are in New Brunswick. Over the years, the combative Sobeyes have fought and won long, bloody battles with big national companies trying to enter their home turf. When important local enterprises teetered on the brink of failure, the Sobeyes routinely helped prop them up. Through it all, they remained largely anonymous outside their small Maritime pond. But that was before Empire's \$1.5-billion November bid to take over the Oshawa Group Ltd., which has chases more than 1,000 food stores in Central Canada and the Prairies, including SGA outlets. The deal, which closed last week, has given the rest of Canada a startling introduction to Nova Scotia's first family of business. "We are what our heritage has made us," says Paul Sobey, Frank's grand son and Empire's chief executive officer. "We are hard workers. We are not high rollers. We are prudent operators committed to the growth and development of all our operating businesses."

That it has always been. What Sobey counts by heritage is the industrious Pictou-born Scots who settled in Pictou County in the mid-19th century to make steel and rail cars and dig for coal. Paul's great-grandfather John Wilson (J.W.) Sobey worked the mines and the family farm before quitting in 1905 to become a butcher and peddle meat door-to-door in Stellarton from a horse-drawn wagon. Seven years later, the first Sobey Food Store stood on Main Street. J.W.'s son Frank—a business college graduate who, even as a teen, fled to pore over financial statements in his free time—was living upstairs as he sharpened his grand plan for expanding the family business. "When you are in business, you either create growth or go stagnant," he said in a rare 1980 interview. "You can't stay still."

As clichéd as those words seem, the Sobeyes have lived by them. Over the past three decades the patriarch's sons, nephews and grandsons have taken his vision and writ it large across the region. The food operations: 141 supermarkets, a line of whole-sale stores, and a supplier of restaurants and institutions—still make up the lion's share of company revenues, which hit \$5.3 billion in the fiscal year ending April 30, 1998. Empire also owns a string of movie theatres and a chain of drugstores throughout Atlantic Canada, as well as more than one million square metres of commercial real estate, most of it East Coast shopping malls. Its investment portfolio includes 43 per cent of

## BUSINESS

# A Pictou empire

The Sobey clan breaks out with a big food deal

BY JOHN DeMONT

The big brick mansion breaks the gentle curve of the northwestern shore of Nova Scotia. Frank Sobey, the man who built Abercrombie House, lived on and off in the waterfront home until he died in 1985 at the age of 83. Now, the only people who stay there usually are family friends, visiting dignitaries and directors of Empire Co. Ltd., the conglomerate he also built. They enjoy meals made by the live-in help and, perhaps, sip a cocktail looking out over the water. Often, though, three eyes focus on the paintings lining the

walls, which include works by Cornelius Krieghoff, A.Y. Jackson, Tom Thomson and Arthur Lismer, along with many other early and contemporary Canadian artists. Experts say that the country's best private collection of Canadian art owned by Canadian media billionaire Kenneth Thomson. But the second-best collection may well hang in this house, on an inlet off Pictou Harbor, a few kilometres from the tiny, tapped-out mining town of Stellarton.

The treasure trove of art seems out of place in a cosmopolitan depressed Pictou. Cause? But so do the sprawling grocery, real estate and investment empires that

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## BUSINESS

Wijaya Ltd., a British Columbia-based manufacturer of heavy equipment, and a 25-per-cent stake in Hensford Bros. Co., a New England grocery chain.

In recent years, though, the modern-day mantra of increasing shareholder value has not gotten as loud in Engpre's St. Lawrence headquarters as it has through the towns of Illy Street, Paul Sebey, who became Engpre's chief executive last July, calls the process "taking a look at where our capital has been invested and

reflecting it into areas where it will produce the best returns." The upheaval over the past five years, Engpre has sold minority stakes in Toronto brick manufacturer Jamrock Inc., National Sea Products Ltd., the Lunenburg, N.S., seafood company, and Provigo Inc., its Montreal-based grocery competitor that last week was taken over by Loblaw Cos. Ltd. Instead of pulling back, Engpre poured a massive \$550 million into its core business of groceries, real estate and drug stores during the same five-year period.

That spending spree, already huge, was topped by the Ottawa-led. The latest move, which gives Engpre a grocery chain that stretches as far as Alberta with total annual sales of more than \$40 billion, represents a quantum leap for the Nine Square firm. Yet management says there was nothing conclusive about the deal, even though it was announced in the same week that Provigo and Loblaw made it known they were planning to merge. Grocers across the continent have a similar problem, with low profit margins and industry rivals. They must rely on heavy sales volume to make money. "Going national means you have more buying power and get a better bang for your buck," explains Douglas Stewart, chief executive of Sobeys Inc., the grocery store side of Engpre's business.

In this case, Engpre leaders say the decision to go national

## LOBLAW FIGHTS BACK

Say yes for the people who run Canada's biggest grocery chain. Loblaw Cos. Ltd. is a \$16-per-share bid to take over Quebec grocery retailer Provigo Inc., the province's gigantic government-owned pension plan squeezed another \$120 million out of Loblaw's, which is controlled by Ontario grocery giant Sobeys Weston. In the end, Loblaw had to raise its cash-and-stock offer from \$1.62 billion to the equivalent of about \$1.74 billion, and immediately guarantees to buy from Quebec farmers and suppliers before the case would agree to sell as 25-per-cent stake in Provigo.

Loblaw, in an odd way, was backed into a corner. Consolidation, after all, is the rallying cry in today's North American grocery business. Although already Canada's biggest grocery retailer, Loblaw had been in acquisition mode for a decade. And suddenly, with the Sobeys claim baring out of the east, a big new competitor was jostling on its door.

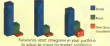
The merger at least provides breathing room. The new company will have sales of \$17 billion, making it far bigger than the \$10-billion-a-year Sobeys chain that will emerge from Engpre Co. Ltd. to \$15-billion takeover of Oshawa Group Ltd., which also received shareholder approval last week. Loblaw, which already has a dominant position in Ontario, now becomes the major player in Quebec, where Provigo is the largest food wholesaler with 25 per cent of the market.

Ontario-based Loblaw has quickly learned the politically-charged nature of doing business in Quebec. As part of the deal, which was announced on the day of the provincial election, Loblaw agreed to contribute to operate Provigo as a separate entity based in Montreal, to re-establish the current 17,000-strong Quebec workforce and to publish regular newspaper notices over the next seven years outlining how much it is buying from Quebec suppliers. But these are only minor inconveniences in the long run—especially amid a rough-and-tumble fight for supremacy in Canada's grocery business.

JOHN DEMONT

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## A hot new breed rules

**T**he stranger rides into town, with a sitgun on his hip and a steely look in his eye. This "lured gun" is an established character in western movies. But these days, he is more likely to be at home in the boardroom than on the range.

In corporate circles, hired guns are more commonly known as "workhorses" or restructuring specialists. They are a hot new breed of executive who take on the task of reorganizing troubled companies and turning them around. In recent weeks, Jack McGregor and William Aiza have made headlines for their respective assignments at Hamilton's Philip Environmental and White Rose Credo and Nursery in Unadilla, Ont. Tom Stephens arrived at Vanguard's MacMillan Bloedel from the United States

In 1991, he surfaced at CallNet, a long-distance phone company on the verge of collapse. He has stayed on there as CEO, overseeing CallNet's steady expansion in the newly deregulated telecom market.

It is not always a wise idea, however, to have guns to stay in the saddle once their job is done. J. P. Bryon rode to the rescue of Calgary's Gulf Canada Resources when it was on the brink. But the aggressive style that saved the company led Bryon into trouble once he was ensconced in the executive suite. Gulf quickly became embroiled in several hostile, costly takeover campaigns and acquired a heavy debt load. Bryon left earlier this year after a dispute with the board.

Still, when a company is in crisis, it is often best for an outsider to step in. In many cases,

creators perceive existing management to be part of the problem, and they are more willing to negotiate—and compromise—with a newcomer. And because hard gaps have no status in the prevailing corporate culture, it is often easier for them to assess problems and take swift, decisive action. Without months of often arduous

of several major assets and the layoff of 5,000 workers. White Rose sought bankruptcy protection within days of Asia's arrival.

Although the hard times brought on by an economic downturn create strong demand for such experts, there is another reason why demand for their services is booming: business conditions now change so rapidly, and so profoundly, that the talents that bring

But in a few cases, it is possible for those who founded a company to restore it later. Steve Jobs is widely credited with saving his first company, Apple Computer, from collapse last year by reclaiming the role of CEO. Currently, as skeptical investors and creditors watch from the sidelines, Michael Cowpland of Corel Corp. is scrambling to restore the credibility of his battered company. As a rule, however, a little distance empowers the man.

## Business NOTES

## CANADIAN EXPANDS HUB

Canadian Airlines International of Calgary will expand operations at Vancouver International Airport, adding flights to 25 cities in Canada and the United States next summer and coordinating its schedule with transnational partners. Making Vancouver a North American hub for flights to and from Asia was a key part of Canada's financial recovery after surviving near bankruptcy two years ago.

## AUTO SALES SLUMP

Canadians bought fewer cars and trucks last month, the second month of decline after strong sales for most of the year. Sales were down 5.6 per cent compared to the same period last year, in part reflecting slumping consumer confidence. Still, sales for the first 11 months of this year remain ahead of 1997 totals.

## RELIEF FOR LIVENT

Troubled live-theatre company Livent Inc. obtained \$28 million in financing to continue operating through June at a deal approved by a U.S. bankruptcy judge hours before the company would have run out of cash. Without the money, Livent would have had to sell assets. The company has fired co-founder Garth Drabinsky and partner Myron Gottlieb, accusing them of fraud. Drabinsky's friends are trying to raise money for his legal defence.

## BLACK BUYS AND SELLS

Corning Black's Hollinger International Inc. is selling 50 shares and 17 warrants in the United States for \$708 million in order to focus on larger publications. The buyer is Atlanta-based Community Newspaper Holdings Inc. Hollinger's Canadian subsidiary has also announced a \$25-a-share takeover bid for the 26 per cent of Southern Inc. shares it doesn't own. Black will offer \$25 a share, as well as a special dividend of \$7 a share payable to all shareholders. Hollinger will use its share of the dividend to help finance the takeover.

## A NEW DRUG GIANT

Germany's Hoechst AG and France's Rhône-Poulenc SA are merging their pharmaceutical operations in a deal that will rival world leaders Merck and Glaxo Wellcome. The company to be called Aventis, will have about \$20 billion in annual sales.

## Boeing cuts jobs

It's places have dominated the skies for 50 years, but the Seattle-based Boeing Co. is encountering turbulence that has imperiled its huge workforce and rattled windows at Wall Street. After the year Boeing said the economic turnaround that has forced many airlines to slash routes and cut planes, the company expects 20,000 jobs by the end of 1990. There last week, it said an additional 20,000 jobs would be gone through 1999 and 2000. U.S. markets reacted swiftly. Boeing shares on the New York Stock Exchange plunged about 17 percent to close down \$6.75 (\$15.1 to \$12.6) (U.S.). In 1989, Boeing's stock hit the same low. The 1990-1991 Boeing-Douglas, the company's largest maker of military aircraft, Boeing's stock peaked at \$96.50 (U.S.). "The situation in Asia has worsened dramatically," said Boeing chairman Philip Cortright. The slump might continue for two to five years, he added, but "we hope it's three." Ironically, Boeing still has a lot of work to do. The company's backlog of orders stands at \$234 billion. Meanwhile, the company says it will lay off as many as 1,000 of its 41,000 employees working during the next two years. It proposes to eliminate 300 of 1,600 jobs in Watertown and 160 of nearly 800 in Aurora, Colo. Last summer, Boeing said it would slash 4,000 jobs in the Seattle area. Boeing's Douglas plant in St. Louis is the last of the street-of-100s.



### HEDY SETTLES:

Hollywood legend Hedy Lamarr, now 84, has reached a settlement with Ottawa-based Corel Corp. allowing the software maker to use her image on its packaging. Lamarr, once considered the world's most beautiful woman, had filed a suit complaining that Corel was using her likeness without permission. The deal gives the company an exclusive, five-year licensing agreement. Financial terms were not released. She originally claimed \$13 million in royalties and damages.

## The TSE's new index

Standard & Poor's and the Toronto Stock Exchange have taken the wraps off what will likely become the armistice of Canada's stock indices. The TSE said that the new enterprise, called the S&P/TSE 60, will begin trading on Dec. 31. Membership will be based on factors such as a company's size, liquidity and

leadership position. At the same time, said S&P vice-president Robert Shalton, "the selection committee also undertakes a rigorous analysis of eligible companies to make sure their fundamentals are solid." The new index will become the global benchmark for the Canadian market. It will contain 13 sectors including health care, communications services, energy, technology and transportation.

## FINANCIAL OUTLOOK

The unemployment rate for November fell to its lowest level in this decade—8 per cent—combating fears that the global financial crisis would slow domestic economic growth. November was the fifth consecutive month for job growth. “Employees are on a rampage,” said Sherry Cooper, chief economist at Hootbit Burns. But a forecast from the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development was less sanguine about Canada’s long-term economic health. The standard of living could fall during the next two decades, it said, pointing to a lag in productivity.

Looking at the global economy, the World Bank said there remains a substantial risk of recession next year, in part because of the worsening

## THE JOB RATE

	Oct., '91	May, '91
Unemployed	20.1	20.2
Unemployed	18.1	14.1
Unemployed	18.7	19.1
Unemployed	11.4	11.4
Unemployed	14.2	14.2
Unemployed	7	6.9
Unemployed	10.1	10.1
Unemployed	1.4	1.4
Unemployed	11.4	11.4
Unemployed	8	7.9

**economic slowdown** While a global recession is possible, the bank forecast world economic growth next year at 1.9 per cent, up slightly from 1.8 per cent expected this year. Reacting to fears of a slowdown, central banks in 11 European countries cut interest rates.

"It is clear that central banks are prepared to do what it takes to avert a major economic slowdown."  
—Nishit Burns

## Coverage for critters

It is the underdog of the insurance business. Pet insurance has been available in Canada since 1989, but less than one per cent of the country's seven million cats and dogs are insured by their owners. "There are so many pet owners that don't even know this product exists," says Melyse Goldford, operations manager for Minutemen, Oak-Beard Pet Plan Insurance, one of a handful of Canadian pet insurers. Those who find out about it often decide against taking out a policy. "People," says Goldford, "just don't feel it's going to happen to them."

Or, in the case, their naturally, but a major accident or serious disease can mean big vet bills. Hip surgery on an older dog could set the owner back \$1,500. Most vets are flexible when it comes to settling accounts, but pet owners saddled with mounting costs often wonder with the heart-breaking choice of whether to go deeper into debt or put the animal down.

Pet insurance is designed to limit that predicament. Critics such as Kiplinger's, a U.S. personal-finance magazine, say some policies include many restrictions to be considered a good value. But Goldford agrees that at Pet Plan, all treatment costs are covered, provided the animal was insured be-

fore the accident or illness. Most plans do not cover elective or preventive procedures, such as vaccines.

Pet Plan, which covers only dogs and cats, insures them for up to \$7,500 per accident or illness. Premiums cost as little as \$42.25 a month. The insurance is also available from Pet Care Insurance of Waterloo, Ont., and Abundant, B.C.-based First Heritage Insurance Services Ltd. It may not offer the same comfort as Pids, but when trouble strikes, insurance could be a pet owner's best friend.



Toronto vet Ian Sandler with patients: costs can be high

## Year-end tax tips

When it comes to taxes, it is tempting to procrastinate. But some decisions just won't wait, warns John Tobin, a Calgary chartered accountant. Unlike contribution to registered retirement savings plans, which can be put off this year until March 1, 1999, certain provisions should be made before the end of the calendar year. "I always go plus before Dec. 31," says Tobin, "and take advantage of what few opportunities there are."

For starters, investors who scored big on the stock market this year may consider selling money-losing stocks by the end of the year to offset capital gains, says Tobin. "Investors should also contribute to their favorite cause by Dec. 31 if they want to take advantage of tax credits on charitable donations. The tax credit

on donations of up to \$300 is 17 per cent, compared with 29 per cent on donations over \$300. Similarly, all child care expenses must be paid by the end of the year, if parents wish to take full advantage of the deduction. Such expenses can only be claimed for the year they were paid.

The golden rule of tax reduction is always to maximize RRSP contributions, though there is no year-end deadline to consider. But Tobin says Canadians who expect income to rise significantly next year should delay deducting some or all of this year's RRSP contribution until the 1999 tax year so they can save more then. Contributions to spousal RRSPs can also help secure tax savings in retirement. Tax planning should be a constant process, Tobin says, but for those who do not follow that advice, making plans now beats waiting until it is too late.

**FORECAST: CROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT** Canada's economy will grow at a healthy clip in the fourth quarter of 1998, despite a sluggish July-to-September period, economists predict. GDP—the country's total output of goods and services—advanced at an annual rate of 1.8 per cent in the third quarter, compared with a growth rate of 4.4 per cent in the same period last year. But with stocks on the upswing, the economy should see more growth, said Sherry Cooper, chief economist at Nesbitt Burns Inc.

## Money Talks

### Join the club

There are up to 5,000 investment clubs in Canada, but until recently, finding Canadian information on running one could be difficult. How to Start and Run an Investment Club for Fun and Learning, published by the successful Canadian Securities Institute (CSI), offers a complete guide—from drawing up a constitution to handling tax forms. Establishing the club's goals and investment philosophy should be the first priority, says the book, which is available for \$29.95 through the CSI's Investor Learning Centre in Montreal, Toronto, Calgary or Vancouver.

### Deals on wheels

The Chevrolet Cavalier LS is the cheapest car to own and operate, followed closely by the Ford Escort LX, according to a survey of 23 similarly equipped vehicles by Runzheimer Canada Inc., a Toronto-based management consulting firm. Annual operating expenses (including fuel, oil, maintenance and brood and feed expenses such as insurance, depreciation, licensing, taxes and licensing) for the Cavalier total \$10,069. Costs were based on an ownership period of three years and mileage of 96,000 km.

#### Total annual vehicle costs

Chevrolet LS	\$10,069
Toyota Camry CE	\$11,813
Ford Windstar	\$12,110
Ford Explorer XL, 4x4	\$14,987
Cadillac DeVille	\$21,085
Mercedes 320 S	\$37,502

### Mortgage rates drop

Canada's major banks continue to cut mortgage rates as the cost of borrowing on bond markets falls. Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce led the charge, reducing its rate for a five-year closed mortgage first to 6.9 per cent from 7.15 per cent, and later to 6.8 per cent. Toronto Dominion Bank and Royal Bank of Canada followed with cuts of between a tenth and more than a third of a percentage point on various mortgage terms. At TD Bank, the two-year rate dropped 0.3 of a point to 6.85 per cent. Five-year variable-rate mortgages at both CIBC and TD Bank stand at 6.75 per cent.

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# Peter C. Newman

## English Canada's wake-up call: grow up!

**T**he astonishing result of the Quebec election demands an unapologetic response from English Canada such as this: "OK, great politics, no more games, let's settle down to some mutual peace, order and good government."

Belief to create the key "winning coalition" required to kill Jacques Parson's charismatic vision of an independent Quebec, the province's voters cast their ballots solely for the status quo. Now it is up to English Canada to grow up, stop trying to buy off the separatists and begin, loudly and firmly, declaring and implementing its own priorities. That will require a level of individual and collective sense of self-confidence notably lacking in English Canada's traditionally detrimental posture.

The best guide to achieving the required tremendous sense of confidence is an obscure speech to the Canadian Criterium Council in 1963 by that self-described "black wolf of Carleton," Scott Symons, delivered when he was curator of Canadiana at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. His remarks, titled, "The Meaning of English Canada," recently became available again in *Scott Symons*, a collection of his essays and his rare fragments (Page / Gester Press, \$24.95). A seventh-generation Canadian who has spent the past 35 years in self-exile in Morocco, Symons has done it all, and then some. Born to Loyalist parents in Toronto's upper-crust Rosedale district, he attended Canadian private schools, eventually graduating from Cambridge and the Sorbonne. Briefly a Canadian novelist of note, he spent most of the 1950s as a journalist in Quebec. (His poetry in his Montreal apartment, Pierre Trudeau took one look at his literary and exiled friend, "Why do you have more French-Canadian than I do?") Symons also worked as a curator in various museums (including the Smithsonian in Washington) and wrote a definitive book on early Canadian literature as well as several experimental novels, including *Place d'Armes* and *Winter of Plink*, that became underground literary classics. At various times, he has been an oyster picker or lamb-rocker in British Columbia and spent a year at Trout River, an obscure Newfoundland fishing village, where he perished at the local Salvation Army canteen. Symons moved permanently to Morocco in 1968—although he makes periodic visits back home—where he was befriended by the American writer Paul Bowles, who once told him, "You're a stranger; nonetheless, you talk like a poet and act like a prince."

Symons has never stopped thinking or writing about Canada, though he has published very little and proclaims his favorite hobby is "trying to stay alive." That survival instinct has honed his talents and sharpened his views of English Canada, which he still believes, as he wrote more than a quarter of a century ago, has a "distinct and distinguished civilization of its own."

Symons advocates a much more profound appreciation of the English-Canadian experience, common throughout all regions of Canada, which he summed up as: "The establishment of an ordered, stable well-organized community, always with the sense of responsible participation in a larger whole. A positive and frank acceptance of ourselves as English-speaking Canadians, that what is already there within us is both essential to the well-being of English Canada and to the understanding of English- and French-Canadian together. This is a hazardous country, indeed a multihazardous one. Its very survival depends on the capacity of English-speaking Canadians to recognize that they already have a positive culture just as it depends on their capacity to communicate that fact to French-speaking Canadians." In other words, let's rejoice in the magnificent country we have created together, instead of squabbling over divisions and lamenting that we lack a clearly defined national identity.

English Canada's history is just as proud as Quebec's. Our achievements in business, architecture and literature are just as significant. Most of all, Symons stresses that it was the decency in the opening of the Canadian frontier that provides the key to understanding English Canada. "Essentially similar to that of the American tradition, the Canadian frontier was treated as an entirely different way. The result was an immediate civilization in democratic circumstances. Instead of 'Bible the Kid,' there were 'The Magnificent Canadian Cowboys,' the Mounties. Whereas American settlement was wide open and unruly, Canada's settlement was controlled and, in contrast, truly. English Canada has consistently been groping its way, mistakenly, towards a new kind of community and a new kind of personality which may be defined by the term 'sophisticated democracy.'"

Furthermore, he argues, "There is a common culture to all the English-speaking Canadian. In contrast to the United States, this has been a process of consolidation rather than revolution, of enrichment as against rejection. Two world wars have confirmed our determination and our sense of large humanity. In short, not only does the English Canadian have meaning, but he has a precise and visible meaning that is drawing him towards a new kind of state and a new kind of state. Thus we need to appreciate a positive and frank acceptance of ourselves as English-speaking Canadians, that what is already there within us is both essential to the well-being of English Canada and to the creative understanding of English- and French-speaking Canadians together."

During the year remaining before the millennium, let's claim the 20th century at least as ours by laying down the winning conditions for a dynamic pan-Canadian nationhood, vowing for us to live out and enjoy Scott Symons's "Canada of the thinking heart" voices close to defining the identity we have all been seeking.

**Quebec's election means the rest of the country must start, loudly and firmly, declaring and implementing its own priorities**



**T**here's vodka. And then there's

**SMIRNOFF.**

In search of the **HOT TOY**

BY PATRICIA CHENGLIN

**T**he toy business is notoriously fickle: even though Canadian sales will tag an estimated \$600 million in 1996, revenues can rise or fall from one year to another. Two long-term trends are making life difficult for the industry, according to Toronto retail marketing consultant Les Kubas:

Canada's falling birth rate and a growing preference among parents for electronic, interactive products with some educational value. One sure way to get consumers to open their wallets, however, is to come up with a hot toy—a product that draws customers into stores in search of the season's must-have purchase. Such an attraction often boards sales for the whole industry, analysts say, because it helps focus more attention on toys. Two years ago, Tickle Me Elmo was such an industry-boosting hit. So for this year, the runaway best-seller is Furby, and every in the toy business are hoping that the bubbling ball of fur will help recharge sales in short legs otherwise seen a backdoor year.

Demand for Furby has led to heated arguments among customers in some U.S. outlets and a brisk secondary market. Furby sellers in Canada have been making as much as \$500 in newspaper ads for the \$40 black-and-white Genie's Eyes, spokesman for Montreal-based Grand Toys Ltd., which distributes Furby in Canada, says the company will ship the toy to stores until Christmas Eve and will continue to try to meet demand in the months afterward.

While Furby appears to be the hottest seller in its category—compared to toys that "respond" to the child—there are a growing number of such products to choose from: Beeping, blinking, talking "intelligent" toys, equipped with microchips, sensors and computer hook-ups that allow a toy to interact with a CD-ROM or even a Web site, on the same retailers this year. Most have still prior tags to match, and some potential buyers have opted to watch a toy in action—many stores provide such displays—before deciding to buy.

Few parents can resist the relentless pressure created by a child who coos a particular tag. But it is also wise to keep other factors in mind, cautions Marie Levein, spokeswoman for the Ottawa-based Canadian Toy Testing Council. The council, an independent group that has been evaluating toys for 46 years, recommends ways of the use generation of playthings but also advises: care in their purchase. "We acknowledge that there are toys that perform for children, but there is not always a lot of lasting value in them," she says. "If the child has to manipulate or control the toy, there is far more play value from that, because the imaginative possibilities of a track or doll are endless. Whereas if a toy does something by rote, even if there are 200 different commands, eventually it's going to be the same thing every played." For toy lovers young and old, here are some of this season's choicer:

**Furby**

Every so often, a "mashable" toy explodes onto the holiday shopping circuit, selling out with in minutes wherever it appears on store shelves. This year, that parents' nightmare has happened in the form of Furby, a motorized stuffed toy with large plastic eyes that blink, wiggle nose and the unique ability to speak "Furbish." The beeping, clicking, cooing Furby has a microchip and six sensors that respond to light, noise, petting—even other Furbies. Unlike some interactive toys, it also "learns" its first vocabulary of about 200 words—in both English and Furbish—develops as it is used. Furby must challenge Furby is unplayable—and emotional. Without warning, it may wince, giggle or pronounce that he is "fennel"—exactly like most small children.

**Tiger Electronics, \$39.99**

Available (somewhat) at Sears, Toys "R" Us, Wal-Mart, Zellers

**LEGO****Mindstorms and Technic Robot's Revenge**

This classic building system just keeps evolving. LEGO has introduced a high-tech version this year called Mindstorms, which allows young people to create programmable robots that are operated using a PC, macros, sensors and an infrared transmitter (recommended for ages 12 and up). But the rest is \$299.99. For younger LEGO addicts, however, there is another, much more affordable new creation that has been popular with small boy-fetters. The Technic Robot's Revenge has 120 pieces that snap together to make models resembling a cross between terminator and futuristic vehicles. Rubber straps on extension arms equipped with plastic swords provide surprising punching action. Ages 9 to 12. **LEGO, \$39.99 (Revenge) and \$299.99 (Mindstorms)**

The Key Store, Toys "R" Us, Wal-Mart, Zellers

**Barbie****Photo Designer Digital Camera and CD-ROM**

How this year from Mattel World's Barbie series is a pack, however, Barbie's camera that lets children take up to 12 shots at a time. When it is connected to a PC, there is no limit to the number of pictures that can be stored together to create a "video." As well, there are several new Barbie CD-ROMs including Jewelry Designer, Seren's Cool Looks Fashion Designer and Barbie Nail Designer. Each CD allows a child to create designs on a computer. (The entire series is compatible with Windows 95. Seeded boxes can be used with Macintosh.) The results can be printed out on special paper, which children may then cut, glue and share.

**Mattel Media, \$27.50 to \$39.50**

The Key Store, Toys "R" Us, Zellers

**Activates Interactive****Bertie, Arthur and P.W., with PC Pack, TV Pack and PC software titles**

These large, cuddly interactive dolls were introduced last year, and they're back. Furby's unpredictability their usage is comely. When users in their hands, feet and ears are pressed they can a vocabulary of up to 4,000 words to engage children in a variety of ways, including singing, fun conversations ("Oh man, do I have insect in my teeth?") and memory games, in which the kids will recognize Bertie's regular information stories. A third innovation makes the dolls to a VCR or PC using a flat plastic disk that sits in a desk and plugs into a computer's game port or a VCR's video jack, there is no physical link between the dolls and the machines. When connected to a PC, the dolls can be used with CD-ROMs to play games, tell stories or help children with tasks such as identifying letters, colors and shapes. The way the dolls' vocabulary jumps to 13,000 words, for compatibility with Macintosh. The VCR connection uses special wires.

**Microsonic, \$44.95 to \$69.99**

Sears, Toys "R" Us, Wal-Mart, Zellers



# They beep, they blink, they talk—and they are stealing the show

## Playmobil System X

The tiny, perfect world of Playmobil has long delighted children for decades with toys that cater to both the imagination and the urge to build. This year, the German-based company has introduced a new line called System X which uses a new assembly method to build a basic structure called a "Citybase."

Children can rearrange the floor plan or turn the Citybase into a café, a fish shop, a hospital or a police station and other role-play sets. The Citybase comes in two sizes: the larger because three little people—teen, child and child—a helicopter, an elevator and a prison cell. Among the set are components as the interior of a police headquarters, an operating room and a helicopter. **Playmobil, \$33.99 to \$139.99** the day, Toys "R" Us, specialty toy stores



## Nintendo computer games

Nintendo continues its assault on the handheld video game market with several new offerings. In the handheld area, there is Game Boy Advance, which uses new technology to display the company's games in a new, color format. Although there are now software titles designed for this format, it is also compatible with previously released black and white games, which will now appear in color. Pokémon, a series of adventure role-playing games with a spin-off TV series and several action figures, that has been a huge hit in Japan, arrived in Canada in September. Game can collect up to 150 creatures, "raising" and "breeding" each one to battle the others. There is also a new sequel to the hugely popular Zelda series—The Legend of Zelda: The Ocarina of Time took four years to develop and has the largest memory of any video game cartridge.

**Nintendo, \$29.95 to \$49.95** Toys "R" Us, Wal-Mart, Zellers and electronics retailers

## Biopens

It looks and works like an ordinary marker but it's also an airbrush in disguise. This washable, non-toxic, reusable toy allows children to create an airbrush type effect simply by squeezing an inner cartridge and hearing it hiss the top half of the marker, marking the cap and then blowing through it, it is ideal for standing and air-spray looks is included with the first marker. A working toy, things you get money. Ages 4 and up.

**Crayon Factory, \$5.95** For local retailers, contact Pierre Dubois Inc. 1-800-562-2336



## Power Chutes—Basic Start

The trademark of former California computer executive Paul Glick, the Powerchutes series was launched last year after three years of development. This model features a base and ladder and interconnecting ramps and platforms that children can build together. When additional construction vehicles, such as a bulldozer and crane, are added, the base part is that the whole first is well controlled.

**Ages 4 and up** **Powerchutes, \$29.99** Specialty toy stores



## Air Hogs

This purple plastic airplane has already raised the profile of its makers, a toy company called Spin Master Toys. Using only air pressure, the one-horsepower engine sends the plane flying and gliding up to 100 m. There is a realistic engine sound, even though the plane uses no batteries. A pump is included. Ages 8 and up.

**Spin Master Toys, \$49.99** Toys "R" Us, Wal-Mart, Zellers



## Little Smart Phonics from A to Z!

Little kids love to push buttons and this key helps them learn alphabet letters at the same time. The large, well-spaced letters have their names or sound, operating an actual function is carried along a "mouse" at the bottom of the keyboard. This game also teaches the concept of before and after and includes the little alphabet. Ages 3 to 4.

**Vitech Electronics Canada Ltd., \$29.99** The Play, Canadian Tire, Sears, Toys "R" Us, Wal-Mart, Zellers



## Bear Buddies

It is sometimes difficult to find board-like games that are simple and engaging for very young children. This product uses pairs of small, colorful bear "toys" cardboard board play and allows and allows them to learn with numbers to teach value matching, counting numbers and adding. For ages 3 to 6.

**Reynoldsburg, \$15.99** For local retailers, contact Pierre Dubois Inc. 1-800-562-2336

## Corolle dolls

The Corolle baby dolls are known for their realistic lifelike proportions and wearability. New this year are Mini Corolle, Emma (\$25), Corolle Flowered (\$26) and the wonderfully named Pail & Virginia Bath Bubbles (\$30). Corolle Flowered will appear in these ages 1 and up, while Mini Corolle and the Bath Bubbles are for children 3 and up. There are no batteries required. These toys rely solely on the imagination. **Corolle, \$23.00 to \$100** Specialty toy stores

## Hand and Finger Puppets and Puppet Theatre

Puppets are growing in popularity as more parents come to appreciate their unique ability to stimulate a child's sense of dramatic play without a large outlay of cash for the need for a lot of storage space. These made by the Manhattan Toy Company are durable, detailed and imaginative and range from one-finger puppets like the colorful Jack-o'-lantern, like Fingerlings, to Spiderman, a more elaborate five-finger style that includes a Spiderman, Wizard and Dragon. Now this year is a new puppet theatre that can be checked up and carried. Ages 2 and up. **Manhattan Toy Company, \$5.50 to \$29.95** For local distributors, contact the Manhattan Toy Company 1-800-541-1342



# Gadgets for grown-ups

BY DANYLO HAWALESHKA

It costs to be on the cutting edge. The latest electronic playthings for adults perform a variety of familiar tasks better—far more willing and able to pay the price. At \$1,500, Panasonic's portable digital video disc player is for folks who simply can't wait to get home to watch the new video release. Cool bassespeople, fed up with cumbersome electronic organizers—or handwritten diaries—may aspire to the electronic notepad. And the family gadget freaks use ditch that single film camera and move smartly into the digital world.

In fact, these newer technologies are gaining a solid foothold in the North American consumer market, despite the prices, industry experts hold the latest gadgets are new at the stage that the VCR and the CD player were in their infancy. Even the cell phone, once a status symbol for jets, is now as likely to be wielded by a soccer mom—or her baby.

A sampler of this season's top for grown-ups:



## Movies to go

Most people who use Panasonic's portable digital video disc player in action for the first time are dumbfounded. And with good reason. At the heart of this prime-sized home theater is a liquid crystal display screen that supercharges images of jaw-dropping clarity. The display itself measures 12.5 by 7.1 cm and accommodates ultra-compact cassette formats. The external battery pack provides about 135 minutes of video disc viewing, after which the battery requires two hours of recharging. It is easy to use, though the built-in stereo speakers are tiny. (Optional headphones solve the problem.) The unit, which also plays music CDs, can be converted to a conventional television for home viewing. A word of warning to anyone planning on watching a movie on the computer to work: it will drive a crowd.

Panasonic DVD-VL500

Suggested retail price: \$1,500

## Pocket music

Cassette tapes and players still dominate the consumer market for recording music even though electronics manufacturers a few years ago tried to convince the buying public that digital audio was better. But consumers greeted the DAT format with a collective shrug and it died a quick death. Sony hopes the portable mini disc—featuring sound quality that rivals CD's—will fare better. Mini discs, which hold 74 minutes of music to 10 minutes, are only about seven centimeters across, compared with 12 cm for CDs. And Sony's digital mini disc technology isn't much bigger than what it plays. Biting, comfortably in a shirt pocket, a portable CD player needs a belt or purse. Unlike CDs, blank mini discs are re-recordable, allowing the user to listen favorite tunes. This year's portable recorder features a reliable control that allows users to select songs and adjust volume and perform other functions without fumbling the unit out of the pocket. Sony's "blank resistant memory" makes skips in the music rare, though the recorder is not, for all that, CD's.

Sony MCE-550

Suggested retail price: \$299.99

## Pictures in pixels

Best of film? This may be the year to consider a digital camera. Though two of the line models are still expensive, prices have been falling steadily and quality has been getting better. The Kodak DC205, for example, has dropped \$150 since it was introduced last June, but still costs \$999. For that money, though, consumers get exceptionally good quality photos from a camera that is easy to use. Images are immediately visible on a two-inch color liquid crystal display on the back of the camera. Pictures taken with the DC205 have one million pixels per image. Translation: good enough to make a 5 by 7 print on a laserjet printer. (The more advanced DC250's resolution is even better: 1.6 million pixels, good enough for printing 8 by 10s and top in resolution in the print-and-shoot market.) Images can be downloaded onto a computer using supplied software. Once downloaded, they can be altered to suit the tastes of the photographer, e-mailed to friends or published on an Internet Web page. Last week, Kodak became the first to introduce digital zoom cameras that come with a high-speed serial connection for personal computers.

Kodak DC205

Suggested retail price: \$999



## Instant memos

Optimas and IBM have combined to make the first digital voice recorder capable of transferring text onto a personal computer. The portable Olympus DS500 comes with a two-megabyte hard capable of recording 15 minutes of speech. With the help of IBM's VoicePro speech-to-text software, users can transfer the recording to their PCs and with the words appear on the monitor. The transcription system is not yet perfect, but some speech-recognition consultants say that with practice, accuracy can be as high as 95 per cent.

Olympus DS500

Suggested retail price: \$499



## Pocket data

Handheld personal organizers have seen and gone, but 3Com's Palm II, and its predecessor the PalmPilot, have become the industry's standards. Part of the reason is size—about as big as a deck of cards, they fit comfortably in a suit pocket or purse. But that's just the beginning. The Rhapsody Palm II can store 8,000 addresses, the sum of appointments, 1,500 to-do items and another 1,500 memos. It comes with a cable and a pedestal that connects the Palm II to a personal computer for backing up files or transferring e-mail messages. As for those who are not into the computer, they can be entered in one of three ways: on the computer and then loaded onto the Palm II, tapped in using a stylus and on screen keyboard, or scribbled across directly on the screen using a flexible, flat, easy-to-learn form of handwriting. And since 3Com leads the industry there is no short list of preprogrammed software and features. (The Internet has several sites to refresh Palm II memory.) An Internet browser also allows users to browse news, schedules, and business cards—or any other information—to follow Palm II owners.

3Com Palm II

Suggested retail price: \$499



## Action adventure

For those who like to be in the thick of things, the Sony Glasstar is a good start. The batteryless headset with built-in computerized text and two small LCD screens were like eyeglasses and is designed to be plugged into either a VCR or VCR player (audio recording). Sony thinks the Glasstar is watching a 32 inch television. Sony never asserts that the device can cause eye strain or injury if used improperly, and possibly even motion sickness. People with high blood pressure are warned to consult their doctors first. According to the manual, "use of this product allows the viewer to feel they are in the action, which may result in increased anxiety or heart injury." But, as they say for the love of heart.

Sony Glasstar PLM-100

Suggested retail price: \$1,000



# THE WARMEST YEAR

## Canadians mark a season of record-high temperatures

BY DANYLO HAWALESHKA

There is a conspicuous absence of snow—artificial or otherwise—at the Mont St-Sauveur ski resort in the Laurentians, 55 km north of Montreal. Of 31 runs, only two were open last week—with bare spots. (The trendy local's answering machine conspicuously referred to "spring skiing conditions.") Across the country, the warmest fall on record has tripped up businesses that rely on plunging necessary to draw customers—while simultaneously giving cold-weather Canadians a welcome reprieve. In November past, there were typically 15 to 20 nights cold enough to allow St-Sauveur's snowmaking equipment to work effectively. This November, there are just five. Pierre Girard, mountain manager of the year-round resort, is keeping staff busy tuning and repairing equipment. He has also kept the ropeway line of a winter park going past its anticipated fall cutoff date. "I've been pouring concrete in December," Girard says with resignation. "You're trying to make the best of it."

Girard is hardly alone in having to cope with unexpected conditions. There has never been a warmer year in the half century that Environment Canada has kept coast-to-coast records. At the U.S. National Climatic Data Center in Asheville, N.C., home of the world's largest archive of weather information, analysts report that the 10 months between May 1997 and October 1998, the warmest the world has experienced in 118 years of detailed record-keeping. And the forecasts call for continuing mild conditions—at least in the short term. The federal government's Canadian Meteorological Centre says the next three months will be warmer than average in Manitoba and parts east, and normal for the rest of the country.

So has global warming definitely arrived? It's still hard to say that conclusively. "It's another piece of evidence," says David Phillips, a Toronto-based senior climatologist at Environment Canada. "We've seen 14 of the warmest years on record occur in the past 18 years."

Whatever the cause, southwestern Canadians know how to make the best of unusually warm weather. At the end of November, they were golfing in Winnipeg, where temperatures soared 10 degrees above normal. Across southern Ontario, either residents basked in temperatures as high as 18° C, while Montserratians enjoyed 15° C warmth, 12 degrees above normal for the date. But there is an ominous downside to those blustery mild temperatures, says Gerry Scott, director of the climate-change campaign for the David Suzuki Foundation in Vancouver. He says global warming—which many scientists attribute to fossil-fuel consumption—is leading to progressively more severe droughts, longer summers and greater threats to plants and animals. In Washington, the Washington Institute released a report showing that the first 11 months of 1998 saw a record for weather-related disasters around the globe, with \$136 billion in damage and economic losses.



Winnipeg, Nov. 27, 1998

32,000 people killed and 300 million forced to flee their homes. "Being able to go golfing in Toronto in December," Scott says, "isn't worth the price."

So what's up with the weather? One good answer is what is being called the El Niño of the century. That refers to the occasional end-of-year appearance of a warm spot in the South Pacific that, starting last December, was larger and longer-lasting than normal. Its consequent effects on global wind patterns and temperatures have, among other things, dried up parts of southern Asia, dumped snow on Mexico and caused an unusual number of brushfires during an abnormally warm stretch in Western Canada last December. Some climatologists believe El Niño had a hand in last January's ice storm in Quebec and Eastern Ontario. Others equate the increasing frequency and intensity of recent El Niños to global warming.

Add to that the chilling effects of La Niña—an unusual cooling of Pacific waters that tends to happen once for every two El

Niños. It's usually not so damaging. La Niña takes part of the blame for 1988's destructive drought in the U.S. Midwest. While a powerful La Niña had been widely anticipated this year—inspiring forecasts of an unusually cold winter in Western Canada, particularly—the phenomenon so far hasn't been pronounced. Phillips at Environment Canada describes the current La Niña as moderate.

Still, Martha McCulloch, manager of the Canadian Hurricane Centre in Dartmouth, N.S., blames La Niña in part for the exceptionally high number of severe hurricanes in this year's Atlantic sea area—14 so far compared with an average of eight. They included the deadliest storm to strike the Western Hemisphere in 200 years, Hurricane Mitch, which killed 11,000 people in October and November. But global warming is also a factor, McCulloch adds. "The thing with global warming," she says, "is that you're going to get a higher incidence of extreme weather."

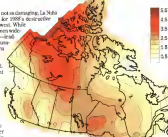
And extreme it has been. Canada's current heat wave has lasted a full year, dating from December, 1967, when the last El Niño waned, exerting its influence. Last winter was Canada's second warmest on record. Since then, spring, summer and fall temperature starts have all set records. Overall, the past 12 months in Canada have been an average of 1.5° C warmer than normal, one full degree above the previous high set in 1981. That is an extraordinary large shift. Prior to 1968, says Phillips, record highs were typically broken by one or two tenths of a degree.

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TWO TALES OF A CITY What a difference a few degrees can make



Winnipeg, Nov. 17, 1996



## CANADIAN HEAT WAVE

Temperatures have ranged from normal to as much as 5° C above normal on average over the past 12 months, during the warmest year ever recorded around the world

SOURCE: CANADIAN CLIMATE CENTRE

As for the upcoming winter, history was on the side of the forecasters who anticipated a cold one. Since the mid-1940s, there have been eight La Niña winters in Canada—six colder than normal and two near normal. So what happened this year? Phillips says the powerful El Niño warmed so much air, land and inland bodies of water that they are taking longer to cool. But by March, he says, Canadians could be in for some truly weather and a colder than average spring. "Winter has just been delayed," Phillips says, "but it has not been cancelled."

For Prairie farmers, the warmer weather can be a blessing. Livestock can graze outdoors, and wheat gets in better because the animals use less food energy just to keep warm. In Regina, daytime temperatures have hovered near the freezing mark—at a time of year when 30° C is not unusual. "Transporting the harvest to grain elevators is a lot easier when the truck starts and there is no snow to plow," says Dan Schwaner, manager of economic analysis and policy development for the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. "You're doing less electricity, and you're not freezing your fingers on cold steel." But the Prairie could also use a good cold spell, Schwaner says. Unless a freezing spell arrives to kill pests like the rusty grain beetle, farmers will have to use extra quantities of pesticides and rotate their crops diligently.

In the Great Lakes, the warmer weather has produced another problem—increased evaporation. It has also caused one of the driest dry years—the south dried as record in Canada, and the Tard dried in the Great Lakes region. The result has been a precipitous drop in the levels of all the lakes and the upper St. Lawrence River. Lake Ontario, for instance, has lost 115 mm from its spring peak—55 mm is normal. The water level in the Port of Montreal is down by 300 cm since spring—the average is 147 cm. Container ships approaching and leaving the port have had to lighten their loads to avoid touching bottom. "The shipping companies are cutting but there's certainly been an economic cost," says David Fyfe, a water resources engineer with the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Regulation Office in Cornwall, Ont.

In parts of Nova Scotia, drought conditions prevailed for the second straight year, while lower-than-normal rainfall and snowfalls in the James Bay area for several years are affecting the electricity-generating capabilities of Hydro Quebec.

In the retail sector, as on old folk, the warmth is cold comfort. Canadians tend to take their cue from the weather in deciding when it's time to buy a winter coat, or a new snowmobile. Randy Scotland, a spokesman for the Retail Council of Canada, says businesses are discounting prices to lure customers. In other words, a buyer's market is in for Christmas. "Retailers are out there drumming their fingers on their counter-tops," Scotland says, "waiting for the weather to change." The weather is changing, many climatologists say. It's just difficult to figure out what it will do next. □



Florence, Denise Daughman: 'Wag'

## Health

# Hospital food fight

Winnipeggers balk at 're-thermalized' meals

On Oct. 8, the first day of a new food service at Winnipeg's Deer Lodge Centre, breakfast arrived late. Florence Daughman was on hand to help her husband, 75-year-old patient Denise Daughman, with his meal. When she finally opened the tray, she was horrified. There was nothing on it but a slice of toast, burned black on the outside and still brown in the middle. "I was angry," Florence says. "I thought it was some kind of mistake." Throughout Deer Lodge, a 487-bed long-term care facility, there were similar expressions of dismay. One patient received only a packet of peanut butter. Another food hall found eggs and sunny side-up soup. It was an unapologetic introduction to Canada's largest experiment with centralized hospital food preparation, and the patients are still finding it hard to digest.

Under Winnipeg's new plan, meals are prepared in Toronto by Amnark Canada Ltd., which also supplies food to such institutions as universities, airports and hotels. Packaged and frozen, the meals are shipped to Winnipeg to be "re-thermalized" as decided in a new \$20-million commissary built to serve the participating hospitals. Manitoba's intensive life-styles similar, equally controversial, moves in other provinces. In 1996, elderly patients at New Brunswick's 12 hospitals and health care centres held news conferences to balk

side, challenging politicians to try to stomach prepackaged meals supplied by the Toronto-based Bove Corp. Home mailed, reheated, soupy breakfasts to then Premier Frank McKenna. But the Liberal government stood firm, the system stayed, and by last May the patient satisfaction rate had crept up from a failing 42 to a barely passing 55 per cent.

British Columbia introduced a similar plan, also operated by Bove, at the Forensic Psychiatric Institute in Port Coquitlam in 1998. Patients outraged by the frozen meal system ultimately took their complaints to the provincial ombudsman's office, and in 1994 the hospital reversed its preparing food in its own kitchen.

In Winnipeg, war divisions similar with the program says the new meals are designed to contain all the nutrients required for a healthy diet. "The problem," she adds, "is getting the food through the patients' mouths." One Deer Lodge nurse, confining that staff members have been discouraged from speaking to the media, and barely half the patients at her ward can tolerate more than small amounts of the new food. "We watched nurses walking around with tears in their eyes, they're so frustrated," she says. "My patients have lost an average of six pounds in the last month."

At the Urban Shared Services Corp., a con-

profit organization representing the nine hospitals, officials say the plan is generally going well. "We're getting favorable reviews from everywhere," says Deer Lodge's CEO Joe Shelt. "We only serve one kind of food, and that's good food. At some point, the hospital staff have to take some responsibility. For example, there have been cases of food trays being left on the nursing floor for 45 minutes before being served."

But even savings advocates are circling under question. The nine hospitals estimate the Amnark food plan will trim \$5.9 million a year from the cost of preparing meals and operating hospital kitchens. However, a University of Winnipeg economist, Philippe Cyrre, says that, quite apart from how it scores on taste tests, the new food is unlikely to be a financial success. In a study he conducted for the Manitoba section of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, a watchdog group concerned with corporate practices and ethics, he concluded the real savings will likely be in the region of \$500,000 a year, once debt servicing on the new commissary is factored in.

At Deer Lodge, Florence Daughman gathered 1,800 names on a petition to protest the food. On Nov. 6, she and a group of wheelchair-bound seniors travelled to the Manitoba legislature to present the petition to Health Minister Dennis Prosser. But Prosser had chosen that day to visit Deer Lodge and taste the food on his own. "He took one spoonful," said a nurse who was present when he sampled the lunch, "made a face and said, 'Hm, not bad for institutional food. It's not a restaurant.' But then he put the spoon down and said thanks, but he'd eaten already."

Daughman, a war veteran who fought his way across France and Holland with the Royal Winnipeg Rifles, moved into Deer Lodge after suffering a stroke 25 years ago. Most of his fellow residents in the modern long-term facility are veterans. With its pleasant architecture, comfortable rooms and large windows overlooking the wooded Assiniboine riverbank, Deer Lodge is named Daughman's words—small Dec. 8. The new food may be adequate for patients in the other hospitals, allows Florence Daughman, because they are all short-term facilities. "But Deer Lodge is different," she adds. "People live here. They can't eat day after day." Daughman is taking her battle to the public, talking to reporters and on speaker radio programs. "This is nothing more than a battle against old people," she says, "and I want everybody to know about it." She says the nurses made keep coming, the staff "One night the patients got mean of what for supper. It came with a side order of beef gravy."

JANE MACDONALD in Winnipeg

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SONY



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THE WORLD IS FLAT.

## Education



Haeckel with Chloe and fellow student Louisa Chen: *Academizing with kids my own age*

## Life at fast-track high

On-campus transition helps gifted teens flourish

Twelve-year-old Profusion Chen is sitting outside a classroom at the University of British Columbia, waiting for a lecture to begin. Luckily, physics class does not begin for 50 minutes, so Chen will have time to gulp down his food before teacher Bruce Copeland presents the students with a problem based on Einstein's theory of relativity—a challenge Chen can tackle with ease. In many ways, Chen is a typical prodigy: boy who skips hockey, into tennis, 4, and devours the *Encyclopedia* series of children's science-fiction novels. But he is also the youngest and, at four feet, four inches, likely one of the smallest students taking courses at one of Canada's premier universities.

This is something that does not seem to faze Chen or the other 24 adolescents enrolled with him in a special transition program sponsored by the Vancouver school board, the B.C. ministry of education and UBC. These students have all scored in the 99th percentile on special tests that measure their academic aptitude and ability to succeed in an accelerated situation. Chen will complete grades 8, 9 and 10 this year and finish grades 11 and 12 next year. That means he will be 14 by the time he is ready for first-year university. "At my other school the only way I could get challenged

was to skip grades and then I would end up being with people who were four years older than I was," says Chen. "Here I can get acclimated with kids in my own age-group."

Some universities, such as Simon Fraser in nearby Burnaby, offer early admission to bright students, and some, such as the University of Toronto, operate high schools for gifted pupils. "This is the only program of its type where the goal is early entrance to university," says co-ordinator Elizabeth Hancock. Not only do the students complete a fast-tracked version of high school, they also benefit from weekly classes by UBC professors in such subjects as physics, math, English and history, and they have borrowing privileges at the university library. "Here, they don't touch you every little detail," says student Carlos Chen, 15. "You're supposed to find things out yourself."

So far, 75 students have graduated from the transition program since it began in 1993. September marked a new phase: the site was moved from a Vancouver secondary school to the UBC campus to, among other things, help the academically gifted adjust to the social norms of university life. The model is a program that has been operating at the University of Washington in Seattle since 1977—a controversial

site at the time but one that has worked very well, notes Kate Noble, assistant director of the Center for the Study of Cripple Youth in Seattle.

"Most of the kids find they are far happier in this program than they ever were at high school," says Noble. "They are no longer the token nerds." She says the young students adjust smoothly to a university. But, she adds, "you can't put 14-year-olds and put them on campus and expect them to thrive. You have to put them in a special program that teaches them to boost their minds and gives them peer and faculty support." For those who go to university at a young age, most are still living at home and so focused on studying that exposure to college-size sex and drinking are not serious issues.

Vancouver school board officials, parents and UBC administrators also hoped the move to campus would underline the project's differences from other gifted programs. "We don't want these kids to think of themselves as high-school students," says Hancock. "We want them to think of themselves as students preparing for university entrance."

The approach is not for everyone—each year several extremely bright children leave, preferring to follow the more traditional route through high school. Still, accelerated learning "is a life-saver for truly exceptional kids who are academically

advanced," argues Dean Matthews, who teaches at the Gustavus Lathrop Jr. School in Edouard and would like to see similar arrangement at the University of Toronto. But parents have their concerns. "This was a very big decision," says Alexandra Pelham, whose 13-year-old son, George, started the transition program this year.

"People have criticized us for pushing him ahead, but he played a big part in the decision. He really wanted this."

Jane Lockhart is 14 and in her first year at UBC. She says she does not know what would have happened to her without the transition program. "It is too bleak to contemplate," she says. Regular school had been so boring she resented going. Now at UBC, Lockhart is reading *Endeavour* and *Pink and Stinky* by Colleen. "I am really enjoying this," says Lockhart, who claims her age is not an issue with fellow classmates.

"The people here are neat, the topics are interesting and the work is challenging."

Profusion Chen is not certain he will go to university when he is 14. He might take some computer courses, or travel with his parents. Right now he says transition school is hard, but the "boredom" isn't. For him, it is just another way of growing up.

JENNIFER HUNTER in Vancouver

## Rights and wrongs



BY BRIAN BERGMAN

The words are almost breathtaking in their simplicity and appeal to common sense. "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights," states the first article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, drafted by a Canadian lawyer, Jukka Humber, and adopted by the fledgling United Nations General Assembly 50 years ago this week. It continues: "They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

In the half-century since the world community endorsed these noble sentiments, it has often stood by, seemingly apathetic, as despots and eager nations erected new monuments to man's inhumanity towards his fellow man. The Killing Fields of Cambodia. Ethnic cleansing in Bosnia. The genocidal madness of Rwanda. An Archbishop Desmond Tutu, himself one of the heroes in the successful struggle against South Africa's apartheid regime, told delegates to an Edmonton conference last last month marking the declaration's anniversary: "When we survey our valuable earth there, we must be appalled that it still has been marked with so much bloodshed and its landscape cluttered with hundreds of thousands of the casualties of the abuse of power."

The universal declaration, ratified by representatives of 48 nations

**Suspected mass grave of murdered Tutsis in Rwanda: the 50-year-old UN declaration of human rights can often seem outdated**

in Paris on Dec. 10, 1948, was not inspired by the then-fresh horrors of the Holocaust—and a growing consensus that, only through the concerted effort of the world's nations, could such atrocity be prevented in the future. While the declaration was not a legally binding document, its main principles have been enshrined in many countries' human rights legislation. (Including the 1960 Canadian Bill of Rights and the 1980 Charter of Rights and Freedoms.) It has also spawned other treaties, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which have been ratified by about three-quarters of United Nations members.

Human rights activists argue that the value of such declarations is to set forth moral standards, against which a nation's actions can be judged. But there is all too often a gaping chasm between what a country says it stands for and the way it behaves. After much international cogitation, China's Communist government recently agreed to sign the UN covenant on civil and political rights, which commands it to protect, among other things, freedom of speech and assembly, as well as the right of every citizen not to

be subject to "arbitrary arrest or detention." Yet just last week, Chinese authorities launched a major crackdown on dissidents, which included the arrests of Xu Wenh and Qiu Yongzhi, two leading democracy advocates opposed to China's system of one-party rule. The pair were detained on the suspicion of attempting to overthrow the state—a crime that carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment.

Yet Juegong, who was elected to the United States in 1997 after spending 14 years in Chinese prisons because of his own role in the pro-democracy movement, notes that the international covenants signed by China are never published among its own citizens. At the same time, he accused Western leaders—including Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, who dismissed his human rights concerns during a visit to Beijing in November—of self-peddling the issue. "That, I told me in an interview during the conference, simply encourages China's rulers to limit international law, even as they solemnly agree to abide by it. 'Western politicians must take a very strong stance,'" says Wu, now a visiting scholar at the University of California, Berkeley, and Columbia University's New York City. "Human rights violations need to be treated like common criminals and pressured into obeying the law."

In an attempt to turn up the heat on repressive regimes, the United Nations in 1998 established a high commissioner for human rights. For the past year, that post has been filled by former Irish president Mary Robinson, a celebrated civil rights advocate. Robins has crossed several worlds with dozens of global globes, including those in Algeria, Cambodia and Congo. But she has also expressed exasperation over the (self-) bureaucracy of the United Nations itself—what she has called "the appalling rules and regulations and barriers" to change.

Along with Tutu, Robinson was one of the featured speakers at the Edmonton conference, spearheaded by the Canadian Human Rights Foundation. China's legacy of human rights abuses still to be ad-

ressed, Robinson told the 700 delegates from more than 30 countries that it was important to mark the 50th anniversary of the universal declaration. But she was not as optimistic for celebrations, she stressed. "We can't celebrate when millions are still victims of torture, oppression and hunger, of terrible poverty."

While the high commissioner's office serves mainly as a lobby post, many human rights activists are looking to another recent UN initiative to put real muscle behind the search for justice. At a conference in June in August, 180 nations, including Canada, agreed in principle to the creation of an international criminal court to try in rare cases of war crimes and crimes against humanity (the United States, China and Israel were among seven nations that voted against the proposed court). Unlike ad hoc tribunals that have been set up to deal with atrocities committed in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, the international criminal court—which must now be ratified by at least 60 member nations to come into force—would need the approval of the UN Security Council to launch a prosecution. Instead, it could proceed as long as an accused came from a signatory nation or the crime occurred on the soil of a state that had ceded jurisdiction to the international body.

Wanping human rights lawyer David Matas, a member of the Canadian delegation that lobbied strongly for the new court, sees it as rectifying a fatal decision made a half century ago. "Then, world leaders adopted the universal declaration on human rights, but they gave up on it. A standing tribunal to deal with any future crimes against humanity would mean that UN law would be the cornerstone of the Nuremberg tribunal on Nazi war crimes. 'The idea was to put the past behind us, while setting the new standards of conduct for the future,'" he says. "What we've found out in the last 50 years is that this was a massive mistake. There has been one genocide after another; one mass killing after another, because there has been no system of deterrence in place." It is a lesson that most of the international community appears finally to be taking to heart. □

## APARTHEID AND THE GLOBAL RESPONSE

South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu was in Edmonton from May 27 to 29 to address a conference marking the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He also delivered a public lecture—attended by 2,700—on the evils of racism and met with 600 schoolchildren at City Hall. Between engagements, he spoke with Maclean's Calgary Bureau Chief Bruce Rogers. Excerpts.

**Maclean's:** What role did the Universal Declaration of Human Rights play in the struggle against apartheid?

**Tutu:** It was quite central. It made clear that our demand to be treated as human beings, with inalienable rights, was not the work of any-outside radicals. The declaration was a standard we could use to measure the policies being applied against us. The same thing is happening in Asia right now, where some nations are claiming there is something they call Asian values, which cut across some of the rights affirmed in the declaration. That is a code for repression. One of the important things is to be able to say human rights are universal.

**Maclean's:** But it is not true that the lofty words must be backed up by some actions—in the case of apartheid, by civil



Tutu: 'human rights are universal'

national sanctions against South Africa?

**Tutu:** Of course. The declaration sets the ideal to reach for. But how do you get there? By action, by getting up and doing something about it.

**Maclean's:** There were great hopes, great expectations when apartheid ended for there remains so much social turmoil in your country. Why is that?

**Tutu:** Anyone who thought that centuries, decades, even centuries, of oppression and injustice would happen smoothly is totally mistaken. Look what happened with the French Revolution, or the Industrial Revolution. Look at what is happening today in Russia, in Bosnia. Periods of transition are almost

by definition periods of chaos. Yes, we are having major problems. But when you begin with the horrendous legacy of apartheid in housing, health, education, you have a whole range of problems. It is unrealistic and quite unfair to thank Canada that has been free for four years and suddenly, by the waving of some magic wand, become a paradise. But we are moving in the right direction.

**Maclean's:** The commission that you recently chaired, looking into the abuses of the apartheid era, put an emphasis on reconciliation rather than retribution. Should those who do evil not pay for it?

**Tutu:** The commission didn't say "Look, you guys got off scot-free." It said, "You have to admit you did wrong if you want amnesty." That is a very important thing, especially when time is the enemy, under the glare of television lights. Their wives or communities heard for the first time that this seemingly decent guy is actually, say, a member of a death squad. That is a form of retribution, perhaps even more devastating than sending someone to prison. **Maclean's:** What role did Canada play in helping to end apartheid?

**Tutu:** Significant. Imagine if you were on the side of the apartheid perpetrators. Where would we be now? Because sometimes all they wanted was your approval. They did all sorts of things to win your approval, psychological impact. They were pathetic. Desmond didn't want to teach them. It was wonderful.



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# People

Edited by  
TANYA DARTES

## Dark age siren songs

**D**on't be fooled by the 14th-century music and innocent-looking singers wearing long gowns. England's Medieval Babes are anything but demure damsels of yore. Their publicity material bills the 12 singers as "layer-swilling, smoking, cursing, tattooed sex goddesses." And some churches in Britain have banned the group, which performs religious and secular medieval songs, after it was revealed that several of the Babes had been that province's background—cat in an ex-singer, another was former convict and some members claim to be former witches. All this undoubtedly helped push both Babes albums, *Sister Norah* and the new *Witches' Rhyme*, to the top of the classical charts.

But according to Babes' Teresa Casella, a Hamilton native, the group's main priority is strictly musical. "We take the music very seriously, but not ourselves," says the 31-year-old, who has lived in Louisa since 1989. Although only founder Katherine Rhubarb is classically trained, adds Casella, "we spend a lot of time learning the harmonies and how to pronounce the lyrics, which are quite diffi-

cult because they are written in Old and Middle English." The Babes are currently on their first Canadian tour, performing primarily in churches. "We love the natural acoustics of churches," says Casella, who along with Rhubarb was a member of the former British punk-rock band *Morinda Sex Garden*. "They're more suited to our swinging medieval sound."



*Anders, with Casella (front right) banned by British churches*

## From soul dude to lusty cartoon character

**B**aby boomers know and love Isaac Hayes for his deep, husky voice and his best-selling soul track to the 1971 film *Shaft*. Now, a younger generation is getting hooked on his distinctive voice—but this time as Chef, the kooky character on the popular animated television series *South Park*. The four-episode show, featuring four laid-back high schoolers, has become a surprise hit. And now that success has been parlayed into a CD, *Chef And The South Park Album*, with off-color songs performed by Meat Loaf, Elton John and Hayes. "Sure, it's a little controversial," says Hayes who lives in New York City, "but I've been at the centre of controversy ever since I first showed my head and started wearing chains."

Hayes, 58, has seen his musical career rise and fall during his 35 years in show business. In the late 1960s, he wrote some classic rhythm and blues songs, including *Good Man and Bad* and *For Coats*. The album *Shaft* earned him an

Academy Award and two Grammys, and popularized an image of Hayes as the ultimate soul dude—a persona that has influenced many contemporary rappers. It also led to sound track work on other '70s "explosion" films, but none of them reached his earlier success. And when he found himself \$5 million in debt in 1979 after the second label he owned went under, Hayes turned to acting, with roles in feature films such as *Exorcist* from *New York* and TV series including *The Rockford Files* and *Alfred Hitchcock*. Now, his voice is back in demand—both on the airwaves and the concert circuit. But *South Park* fans insisting his shows shouldn't expect him to sing Chef classics like *Chocolate Soul-Boots* (R/S) *I Love That*. "It'll depend on who's in the audience," he says, laughing. "It's not for the stiff-necked types, although it would certainly wake them up."

*Hayes with Chef: 'not for the stiff-necked'*



Illustration: Michael Ondaatje

# Marginalized murder

Unseen brutality pervades a directorial debut

SAUL Rubinek has made a Hollywood career out of playing unsavory types who lurk around the edges of the action. In *Unforgiven*, he was the sinister scrooge who dined on Gary Buckman's cold-shoulder in *True Women*; he was a corrupt movie mogul. And he has played enough crooked lawyers to learn a couple partnership—in movies such as *Wall Street*, *The Referee* or *The Verdict* and *Against All Odds*. But with his latest film, the 50-year-old actor—who was born to Polish parents in a German refugee camp and raised in Toronto—has earned the title. Call it the revenge of the character actor.

Jerry & Tom, a black comedy about hit men who double as used-car salesmen, marks Rubinek's feature directing debut. And for his cast, he recruited a who's who of character actors, including Joe Mantegna, Charles Durning, William H. Macy and Mary Chaplin. Most of them are his friends. "I called the actors at home, and all of course they worked for less money," Rubinek said in a phone interview last week from his house in the Halcyon Hills. "It was an agent's nightmare." To find Chaplin, he had to go to Hollywood—the Canadian actor rents an apartment in the ground floor of Rubinek's two-story duplex.

Adapted by American writer Rick Cleveland from his own stage play, *Jerry & Tom* was shot in Toronto for the relatively modest sum of \$5 million. And with Miramax Films snapping up U.S. distribution rights for \$4.5 million at the Sundance Film Festival last January, the film is already a commercial success. By turns theatrical and gruesomely comic, *Jerry & Tom* is unspectacularly theatrical. It consists of mostly understated scenes of dialogue, punctuated by deadpan school-of-crime killings. Although it features 12 murders, all of them occur off-camera. Nevertheless, a visceral sliver of brutality pervades the film—a fusion so delecting that some people

who walked out at Sundance, says the director, claimed the violence was "too graphic."

Rubinek sees Jerry & Tom as an antidote to the current string of stylishly violent black comedies, a trend that can be traced to Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction* (1994). "My sense for that has diminished as my children (aged 7 and 11) have grown older," says the actor, who is married to producer Elmar Lind. "This is a movie about the consequences of violence, and I didn't want to be a hypocrite—to give the parent's pleasure of depicting heads exploding and fists being slugged."

It could be argued that there is something classically Canadian about a movie devoted to killing that shows no bloodshed. "There is a Canadian sensibility in this picture, but I can't articulate it," says Rubinek, who maintains a house in Toronto and enjoys dual citizenship (it has been blooded and nurtured by both cultures). The actor adds that he was deeply intrigued by working with Clint Eastwood on *Unforgiven*—a rather move about the consequences of violence. And he was amazed by Eastwood's unobtrusive directing style. "If you went on the set of *Unforgiven* and he wasn't a famous face, it would take you half an hour to figure out who the director was."

Unlike Eastwood, however, Rubinek did not try to work both sides of the camera. "There's a childlike quality that's required for an actor," he explains. "But as a director, you're required to provide the atmosphere where other people can work. And this took all my concentration and energy." In the end, what did Rubinek learn about the craft? "I have to sit down more and wear better shoes," he says. "Accomplices and a good chair."

ERIAN D. JOHNSON

Saul Rubinek influenced by Clint Eastwood



FRANK RUBINEK: A major movie role

## Mom's big breakthrough

Saul Rubinek's mother was finally ready for her close-up. She had never really acted before, but her son is an actor. Her husband, Israel, who died two years ago, was an actor. And at the age of 70, Frania Rubinek was finally stepping up to the plate, big time. Recently, she spent a month in Baltimore shooting a major supporting role as a Jewish mother in *Liberty Heights*, a movie by Barry Levinson (Rialto March). The Oscar-winning director had cast Frania in a tiny part opposite her husband in *Awake* (1990). And he never forgot her. Last July, says Saul Rubinek, "I got a call from my agent saying 'Barry Levinson wants you to put your mother on tape.'"

But Frania, who divides her time between Toronto and Florida, was not an easy catch. Saul refused to put her on tape because she was planning to be in a Mediterranean cruise with an 85-year-old friend during the shoot. After much negotiation, however, with guarantees that she would be whisked before the cruise, Levinson cast her. Frania plays Joe Mantegna's mother in the film, a comedy-drama about two teenage boys growing up in the 1950s. And she acted like a veteran scene stealer, according to Saul. She improvised lines, and so impressed Levinson that he wrote extra dialogue for her. Visiting the set, Rubinek asked Mantegna if he was taking care of his mother. "Taking care of her?" said Mantegna. "No one can survive in a scene with her!"

B.D.

# Canadian Heroes

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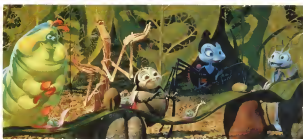


Canadian Heroes, hosted by Pamela Wallin, airs on CTV on Wednesday, December 30, 1998 at 8:00 p.m.



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## Grown-up kids' stuff

December is the darkest month, and some of the movies out there make it seem even darker, grown-up movies full of grown-up horror. But there are days when you just may not be in the mood to watch an *Amos & Andy* blood to death as a Las Vegas hotel room (*Viva Dead Things*). Or witness a trio of 15th-century burlesque bards at the stake (*Shakespeare*). Or see what the blood going down the drain in *Psycho's* shower scene looks like in color. So what must an adult do to find some unadmitted joy at the movies? Go to a kiddie flick. Yes, a cartoon. Get a babysitter, and catch *A Bug's Life* on a Saturday night. Or sock back a quartet of two and take a date to *Babe, Pig in the City*.

Of course, it is also possible to take children to one of three movies, to drag the family out to a weekend matinee. And for as odd as it appears, the full-dinner courtesy of *The Rugrats Movie* is helpful to see it with an audience of actual rug rats, whose behavior quickly became part of the movie's magic. But the real test of family entertainment is that it entertains the discriminating adult as well as the impressionable child. And some of the recent kid flicks are among the wisest, most sophisticated movies to come out of Hollywood this year in any genre.

*A Bug's Life* is the blockbuster: Opening on the American Thanksgiving weekend, it broke box-office records by amassing a colossal \$172 million in just five days—surpassing *Out to Sea, Pig in the City*, which came away from the trough with only \$115 million. The success of *A Bug's*



John D. Johnson

*Life*, however, is less remarkable than the fact that a Disney cartoon belatedly to a massive top-grossing campaign is a contrived formula piece. But then, it was created by the computer wizards at Pixar Animation Studios, the team behind *Toy Story* (1995). And computer animation seems to have brought a fresh sense of invention—and subversion—to cartoon features that goes beyond mere technique.

The similarities between *Antz* and *A Bug's Life* are so striking that you have to wonder if the writers were saying to one another's e-mail, "Both are stories of a kindly overcast ant colony that is threatened by a fascist overlord. Both graft satirical Marxist economics to fables of heroic individuals. And in both cases, the hero is a social insect without social skills—a creature not who overcomes a lack of self-esteem to save

Scene from *A Bug's Life*, among the wisest Hollywood movies this year in any genre

royalty and rescue the colony from totalitarianism. But *A Bug's Life* is a bigger, brighter, more kid-friendly movie. Although it lacks the *Grease*-like elegance of *Antz*, it boasts a stronger story, superior animation and a more colorful array of characters. Entomologists may wonder why the ants in *A Bug's Life* have adolescent lavender complexion, Colgate smiles, two arms and two legs, but they could also question why Mickey Mouse wears white gloves. These insects are, above all, cute and cuddly.

Inspired by an *Aesop* fable, the story pits an industrious ant colony against a cruel gang of busy grasshoppers. Like an absentee landlord, their malicious leader, Hopper (voiced by Kevin Spacey), forces the ants to fork over a huge portion of their harvest to him each season. The anti-heroic paragon is Flik (voiced by Canada's Dave Foley), a hapless inventor who enlists a mating Beethoven to fight the grasshoppers.

The art voices include Phyllis Diller as the colony's queen and Julia Louis-Dreyfus as her princess daughter. But the crown goes



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MACLEAN'S TORONTO EDITION - DECEMBER 14, 1998



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we'll continue about starting one Toronto office project in 1999 and a second in 2000. John Sullivan  
SVP Office Development,  
The Capital Finance Corporation Limited

Business in the central area, indeed is all of Toronto, is a very high priority of mine, and I will continue to address issues related to the cost of doing business, including taxes. More businesses have chosen Toronto because we offer more of what they want - more services, more clients, more customers, clients and networks. I will make

sure we continue to offer more. Ken McLaughlin  
Mayor, City of Toronto

The Ontario marketplace is now enjoying an improved balance of supply and demand factors for office and industrial product. We anticipate these fundamentals will remain in balance in 1999 and provide developers the opportunity to create new products to meet the needs of the market. Philip Gile  
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Space can be a tool for enhancing corporate performance. Workplaces can be designed to help *Business Horizons*, reduce product development cycles, respond more quickly to change, facilitate learning, and save costs. Workplaces that are aligned with corporate goals can encourage people to believe in new ways and help achieve desired business results.

To successfully bring a facility in line with corporate goals it is important to explore:



- a company's business objectives and issues
- the existing work environment
- space and furniture strategies that can support the desired changes
- potential impact of a new environment on the individuals and the organization
- measurements of success
- ways to continually refine the environment

Stedecor has helped many companies focus on their business objectives, the behaviors necessary for achieving those objectives and the kinds of space and furniture solutions that can encourage desired behaviors while effectively supporting the work at hand.

Witness by Barry Zimand, Director, Designated Interiors Consulting & Advanced Solutions, Stedecor Canada Limited

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Area	Rate
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Brampton	3.184
Burlington	3.184
Calderdale	3.400
Markham	3.348
Mississauga	3.415
Oakville	3.404
Quincyville	3.400
Pickering	3.400
Richmond Hill	3.400
Toronto	3.315
Unionville	3.315
Windsor	3.400

Source: City of Markham  
Economic Development Office

# Maclean's On The WEB

In addition to articles from the current issue, the site offers a unique literary forum, hosted by some of Canada's top writers.

<http://www.macleans.ca>



## Writers in Electronic Residence

### Ice Storm Diary

"We were lucky, really: our power was only out for three days, but in the country that means no heat, no light and no water, as our pump is operated by electricity. The flicker of overhead lights usually means we will once again feel like hostages to hydro, but never before has the land itself been so ravaged by weather. Trees are pale spears against the winter sky; we joke that we have wood to burn for 20 years if we could just get outside to collect it. It is -16° C today and many people I know are sheltering their friends who are still without power."

"In the country, people pull together like nowhere else I've lived. It cheers me to see the handwritten sign in the IGA: the offer of a warm place to take the chill off with a bowl of stew, to stand with others and laugh about 'the storm of '98' and the stories we'll tell our grandchildren of how we learned to live like our own great-grandparents, how we learned to cook on the woodstove, how all of us (two adults, three children, two dogs, one rabbit and some goldfish) stayed in one room and kept each other warm."

"Some people even said they were sad when the lights went on, but they were grateful to have at least been warm and fed. There are many stories to be told—there are tales of frustration and anger and love, and all have a place in this forum." (In fact, the site received hundreds of similar tales from eastern Ontario and Quebec.)

—Poet Carolyn Smart,  
Sydenham, Ont.



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# The spell of the Great White North

A U.S. novelist is inspired by Canada

Howard Norman has a thing about Halifax. "It's my favorite city," declares the nomadic author, who is based in rural Vermont and writes novels about Canada. "It is where my imagination, for better or worse, comes alive." Norman has fond memories of living in actor-playwright Sam Shepard's house in Adequate Harbour, N.S., 20 years ago and sometimes driving 235 km into Halifax in all in a hot lobby to watch the passing parade of life while taking a break from his first "ice-bite attempts" at writing novels. It was during one of those visits that he met an old art gallery curator who recounted how he had received consigned shipments of European paint-

ings just as Adolf Hitler was beginning his purge of "degenerate art" in the final days before the Second World War. The encounter stuck with Norman all these years, becoming the basis of his latest novel. In *The Museum Guard* (Knopf Canada, \$32.95), the Maritime city where he struggled to find his artistic voice becomes a full-blown, claustrophobic crossroads in which domestic drama and the great sweep of history intersect. Norman, who often visits Nova Scotia, finds inspiration in funny places. He got the idea for *The Bird Artist*, his confined



Norman: his latest book is set in a mostly fictitious

1994 novel about turn-of-the-century Newfoundland, after reading about the mariner of an outpost lighthouse keeper. His current work in progress, called *The Museum of G/L*, and set in Churchill, Man., and Halifax, owes its origins to a photograph he once saw that purportedly showed the souls of lost plane crash victims rising from the wreckage below. Whatever their beginnings, his novels are about compelling, off-kilter folk living in marginal places who suddenly find themselves having to cope with the arbitrariness of life. "There are a lot of ophans in my books," admits the 49-year-old author; "people who have been unmoored and try to reconstruct a life as best they can."

Just as he did, Norman's father deserted his family, leaving his son to be brought up by his mother, uncle and uncle in a self-sustaining household in Grand Rapids, Mich. He got his first taste of Canada's wide-open spaces as a teen, visiting cousins who had settled outside Toronto. But the real connection to this country was forged later, after he had finished a degree in zoology and then one in folklore, which took him to the Canadian North as a student of native and Inuit culture.

Trying to stake out a freelance writer's life, Norman spent the '70s tramping around the Arctic and the Maritimes, transcribing native myths and writing travel pieces for magazines and narrative for nature documentary films. In 1986, he moved to Cambridge, Mass., where he met the poet Jane Shore, who became his wife (they have a 10-year-old daughter, Emma). But the big, stark Canada comes

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For the 15th straight year, Maclean's will explore the hopes and fears of Canadians in the most authoritative year-end portrait of the national mood.

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**Are people more or less optimistic going into 1999?**

**Are they better off or have their personal finances deteriorated?**

**Who do they trust to look after their affairs?**

**Who do they trust in Ottawa? How is their sex life?**

The full portrait will be available in a 25-page report in Maclean's Dec. 28, 1998-Jan. 6, 1999 double issue, available on newsstands on Dec. 21, 1998.

This issue also will include the most memorable photo images of 1998.

Watch the CBC's *National Magazine* for two special reports.

**Monday, Dec. 21: *The Canadian Condition*** —  
Is the gap widening between rich and poor? ... Who will lead Canada into the new millennium?  
... Will aliens look like us?

**Tuesday, Dec. 22: *Sex and Consequences*** —  
Are moral standards different for politicians? ... Which province has the most sex? ...  
Would you let your 18-year-old daughter sleep with her boyfriend in your home?

CBC reporters from across the country will file the inside stories from Maclean's/The National Year-End Poll.

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## BOOKS

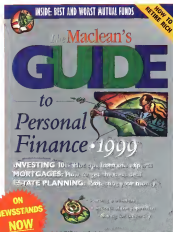
kept calling out to the artist as Norman. "Where you are most sustained, your literary imagination is most sustained," he explains.

Norman published his 1987 debut novel, *The Northern Lights*, set in Manitoba and Toronto, at the somewhat ripe old age of 34. It was nominated for the National Book Award in the United States. So was his later effort, *The Red Artist*, a tale of love, loss and murder in outpost Newfoundland, which *The Los Angeles Times* called "magical" and a reviewer for *The New York Times* said reads like a highlight in the reader's mind.

Anyone who has read the Newfoundland book will experience a sense of déjà vu with *The Museum Guard*, set in Halifax in 1938 as the clouds of war gather over Europe. After all, both books take place on the East Coast, involve art, and begin with the admission of a crime. Then there are the striking similarities between Fabian Voss, the lovelorn painter of birds who shoots the local lighthouse keeper after the keeper seduces Voss's mother and beds Voss's boozey girlfriend, and Delor Russell, the winged, equally lovelorn narrator of *The Museum Guard*. Russell loses his parents in a seppelin crash and loses his heart to a strange Jewish cemetery keeper, Isadora Lussky, who becomes so convinced that she is the subject of a painting called *Jesus on a Street in Amsterdam*, newly arrived at that cemetery where Russell works, that she ultimately leaves for Europe, where Jews are already fleeing the horrors to come.

But Norman is hardly repeating himself. In his previous novels, he says, he set out to demonstrate how hard, demanding landscapes affect character. *The Museum Guard*, however, is a sharp, precise performance on a different scale: "I wanted to write a novel in which lives lived in small places out somehow foreshadow the big world events," he says. So the story occurs almost entirely inside. The visitors include the divorced mother, Isadora Russell and his uncle work, the hotels where all the characters live, and the shack in the cemetery where Isadora seduces further into her obsession that she, instead of the painter's wife who committed suicide, is the woman in the painting. Halcyons may not accurately recognize the moody, unsettling place where the story unfolds. But Norman has remade their city into a world where the drama of life can overlap time and space—and souls are lost, found and reinvented.

JOHN DEMONT on *Maclean's*



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# Allan Fotheringham

## In case you didn't notice, it's a wacky world

**S**o, you see, I'm home, alone on a Saturday afternoon, my feet up, contemplating the universe, and the phone rings. It is a female voice—one of those voices you know is masquerading as a machine—and she asks me if I have received the *Snow* catalogue flyer at my door.

"Lady, I tell her, 'are you serious?' I hang up. I live in a world where in Texas, the richest nation in man kind's history, there are more than 400 people sitting on death row, waiting to be dispatched, and the governor of the state who allows this is George W. Bush who is the leading Republican candidate to be the next president. A world where farmers in Saskatchewan are shooting their piglets because hog prices are so low and, in the meantime, people in Russia are starving.

A world where in a democracy called Canada the voters in Quebec get 43.7 per cent of the vote and only 43 seats while the Parti Québécois gets 42.7 per cent of the vote and 75 seats. Where Toronto city council, because it can't find a way to stop filthy, raging sewerage flows from bothering motorists, wants to spend \$250,000 to rehabilitate them and house them and wipe their noses.

A world where the president of the most powerful nation on earth is regularly serviced by a young woman near the age of his own daughter, in a cubicle off the Oval Office within earshot of his secretary, and then for months goes on television to tell the American people that what he was doing was not really sex. A world where on premises Garth Drabinski, who was paid \$13,000 (U.S.) a week by his client the company that is now in bankruptcy, has just authorized a circular letter sent to newshunters asking for donations of \$100,000 to help pay his legal bills.

It's a world where the CBC, that great bastion of free speech and human rights, has given reporter Terry McInnis a further suspension of 15 days because he actually wrote with his own left hand a letter to *The Globe and Mail* setting out his case. Where the United States, which supported Gen. Augusto Pinochet in the coup that overthrew and led to the death of the democratically elected Marxist Salvador Allende, now applies diplo-



matic muscle baying to stop his extradition from Britain to Spain. Where the Conservative Party of Canada, to revive itself, chooses as its new, fresh blood under the dog who two decades ago, committed political suicide while leading it. Where the brilliant business men and politicians who arranged to have the taxpayers build Toronto's SkyDome now find it bankrupt and financially toxic, only now realizing it is too small to host either the Olympic Games or a National Football League franchise.

A world where *Time* magazine, in choosing the 20 "most influential leaders and titans" of the century (19 of them American) includes gangster Lucky Luciano because while he "created something horrible, it worked well." Where teachers strike in Ontario for better working conditions and more status in British Columbia for more money, while Mike Piazza of the New York Mets signs for \$91 million (U.S.) over seven years and Randy Johnson, who works only every fifth day in a six-month post season for \$55 million (U.S.) over four years with the Arizona Diamondbacks.

Where the World Bank now says the decision by the International Monetary Fund and the United States treasury last year to urge Asian countries to push their interest rates using was a crucial blunder that only worsened the world financial crisis and as a result, nearly half the world's population will experience a recession next year. And some 26 per cent of Canadian banks' international commercial loan exposure is in Latin America, where wherefore Brazil is in the biggest danger.

In the meantime, the grannies who are building computers apparently couldn't figure out that a century comes to an end eventually and the 2000 millennium bug problem as frightens those in charge that the RCMP and police forces have cracked all vehicles until March on day of civic unrest when all the elevators stop and the planes won't fly, and your car won't start.

This is the same world where two dozen Canadian scientists have discovered that Ottawa bureaucrats, who let the cod fishery collapse, now ignore the evidence that the Newfoundland and Labrador 40 per cent quota seals than are actually caught and "processed" by hunters.

While, in Mexico it is found that Citibank of New York allowed a special deal for wealthy clients to move \$1.8 million secretly out of the country for Rodolfo Salazar de Gortari, brother of the former president. The \$500 million—in addition to a further \$154 million that Swiss authorities have confiscated—was promised money paid by drug traffickers. The wealthy former president, Carlos Salazar, is presently, we believe, in exile in Ireland, after hiding out for some time in Montreal, obviously with full knowledge of our lovely Ottawa government.

And some lady on Saturday afternoon is bothering me about whether a jerkball guy is doing his job, and will be sucked if I sit on him?

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